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AFRICAN DISCOVERY
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RACE AND POLITICS IN KENYA
(WITH E. HUXLEY)

THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

by

MARGERY PERHAM

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PREFACE

Ethiopia has from very early days been a name of romantic fascination to Europe. Christian, remote and inaccessible she had the charm of mystery. There was no accumulation of reliable and comprehensive knowledge about the country which could satisfy and sober Europe's curiosity. The information had to be sought by hardy travellers who from time to time adventured into this far country across strong physical and political barriers. It is fortunate, indeed, that so many of these adventurers did write and could write, and much of their work makes splendid and dramatic reading. But when any serious appraisement of the modern Ethiopia is attempted upon their evidence, its limitations at once become clear. These are imposed by the special purposes, religious or political, of their expeditions; by the physical restrictions of their movements in a vast and often dangerous country, and perhaps by that slight over-exaltation of their own personalities that often besets the men who are the recorders of their own remote and daring enterprises. These travellers were, perhaps, influenced further by the special kind of expectation and interest for which they were writing. Their books were bound to be episodic and impressionist, and they tended, with important exceptions, to be highly subjective in treatment and strong in colour.

In recent years, and especially since the Italian invasion, Ethiopia has gained an interest far beyond that of a land of enthralling legends and travellers' stories. The affairs of the country have become a question of first-class international importance. It is a question with which the British Government, above all, has been intimately concerned and about which it has still to make important decisions in the near future. Besides this urgent call upon the attention of the world, Ethiopia has developed secondary features of interest. She holds an important position in a continent where the hitherto isolated parts are beginning to draw together; she represents the only important part of tropical Africa under independent rule; finally, in a sphere of growing tension, that of race relations, she has acquired a world-wide representative significance.

It was clear early in the 1939–45 war that Ethiopia's destiny was likely to be recast and that there was an urgent need to put before the British public an objective and up-to-date account of the country, so that for the policy that was even then being framed the Foreign Office could count upon some informed understanding and criticism in this country. This was the more necessary as, in spite of the numerous journalists who had been drawn to Addis Ababa for the few months of the Italian conquest, Ethiopia still retained much of her ancient unintelligibility. The very reasons for her notoriety had, indeed, caused a new kind of obscurity. The circumstances of her seizure by Italy had made her a test case of collective security and her undeserved misfortune had aroused intense sympathy and emotion, especially in Britain. But all these strong and controversial opinions and feelings about Ethiopia had made of her more a symbol than a reality and had done little to advance that true knowledge of her character and conditions which was almost irrelevant to the controversies. There was, indeed, from the time of the conquest a volume of sustained, energetic, emotional, and one-sided propaganda directed upon British opinion, while far too little serious information which might have corrected this was being offered.

Early in the war the Royal Institute of International Affairs, appreciating the urgent need for some objective summary of the position of Ethiopia, arranged for a report to be written which should synthesize briefly the available information. Dr. A. I. Richards and Dr. L. P. Mair wrote chapters of the report and Mr. F. de Halpert contributed his personal knowledge of the Ethiopian Government as it had been before the Italian conquest. I collaborated with him in this part of the report and, as the work was carried out at Oxford, I benefited from association with the scheme. The report was not published but was circulated privately in quarters where it would be useful at that time.

This experience made me more convinced than before that a full study of the Ethiopian government, written for publication, was very much needed. I hoped that someone better qualified than myself would meet that need, but suggestions and persuasions in one or two obvious directions produced no results. I had always been much interested in Ethiopia, and for some twenty years had enjoyed personal links with this territory. I realized the difficulties of writing about the country without carrying on research within its boundaries. On the other hand, no-one who was not able to spend several years there, learn at least its major language, and travel widely about its large and difficult surface, could hope to write from his own researches the general, comprehensive study of government I had in mind. The Ethiopians, especially in the mood and in the conditions following their liberation, would find it difficult to provide the kind of evidence required or to facilitate wide and deep investigation. A brief visit to Addis Ababa and its environs would do little to advance knowledge of the kind I sought. I had travelled and studied in the territories surrounding Ethiopia, and had lived for a time upon its borders in British Somaliland, trekking from here into the neighbouring part of Ethiopia. I was prepared to spend what leisure I could take from my university work upon further studies of the available evidence. Above all I had the advantage of a long friendship with Mr. Frank de Halpert and of collaboration with him in the report we had written together. For all these reasons I decided to attempt a study of Ethiopian government.

I must here define more fully my obligation to Frank de Halpert. He had formerly worked in the Egyptian Civil Service and had entered the service of the Emperor. His appointment, which was arranged by the Emperor through the British Foreign Office, was partly the result of the pressure from British public opinion with regard to slavery in Ethiopia. De Halpert was given the post of Adviser to the Minister of the Interior and it was recognized that it would be his special duty to advise with regard to the suppression of slavery. He took up his duties in 1930 and gained considerable knowledge of the workings of the Ethiopian government during the next three years. In 1933, in protest against the successive delays and evasions he encountered in his endeavour to further the execution of the Emperor's proclaimed anti-slavery measures, he resigned. After his resignation, between 1933 and 1935, he travelled over most of the country. He was one of the few Europeans to travel through south-western Ethiopia to Lake Rudolf. On the eve of the Italian attack he was invited by the Emperor to act as adviser to the Governor of Goré but he had by then volunteered to join the British Red Cross unit working with the Ethiopian army under the leadership of Dr. John Melly. From this arduous and dangerous work he returned to the capital in time to play a distinguished part with Dr. Melly and others in their endeavour, in which Dr. Melly was killed, to save lives during the orgy of looting and murder which filled the interval between the Emperor's flight and the entry of the Italian forces.

Starting from the brief description of Haile Selassié's government as it was in 1935, which de Halpert and I had put together in 1941, I proceeded to broaden out this picture from other verbal or written evidence upon this period. Then—a far more congenial and illuminating task—I traced the historical background of the main Ethiopian institutions. I was then able to obtain, for what they were worth and as they became increasingly available, the Italian records of their work in Ethiopia. Here Dr. Mair's chapter, completed in 1941, was of considerable initial help, but the whole of the evidence, which was necessarily based on the Italian authorities, is, as she herself will agree, tainted with national advertisement and justification. The factual information winnowed out from the pretentious volumes they issued later merited little space in the record. Finally I collected all the available information from printed records and from living witnesses of the constitution and conduct of the Ethiopian Government since the liberation.

My debt to Frank de Halpert for much of the information about Ethiopia in 1935 will now be clear. It will be obvious that he has contributed his unique experience to the chapter upon slavery; he has been heavily quoted in the chapters upon Sidamo and negro districts. He also gave me valuable information about the central government, the social services, and some of the provinces before the Italian conquest. He is also responsible for the genealogy; for putting together the most important of the maps—the provinces in 1935 with language map inset—and for seeing the other maps through the press. He is, however, insistent that I should make it clear that, with these exceptions, this book is my own, having been written, on and off, during the years since 1942 when he was absorbed in other work.

Generally speaking, the end of 1945 is the date at which the concluding line is drawn, but I have here and there been able to add to the proofs items of additional information of importance which became available. One illustration of the extreme difficulty of writing a book of this kind may be given. I have made an important point of the lack of European access to the formerly oppressed negro districts of the south-west. When it was just too late to revise the text of the book, I learned that sanction has been given to the American United Presbyterian Mission to work in Maji. The missionaries will probably include a minister and two women and will set up a school and a dispensary. Further, I understand that in Kaffa, the Sidamo province which suffered so much in the past from Shoan exactions, the Sudan Interior Mission has been allotted a sphere for its activities. This is indeed good news, and it is only just, in view of what has been said in the book, that I should take this eleventh-hour opportunity of including these new facts between its covers.

The plan of the book can now be defined. It is wholly concerned with the institutions of government, with its emphasis upon 1935, the last year of the old unconquered Ethiopia. This situation is seen as the climax of historical development, for the better understanding of which an historical introduction has been written; and it is followed by a sketch, inevitably somewhat incomplete and speculative, of the fortunes of each institution under the Italians and since the liberation. The difficulty of dealing with contemporary, or almost contemporary, affairs will only be known in its full exasperation by those who have attempted it. It must reach its height in an Ethiopian study, because of the distance of the subject, and the piecemeal and often unreliable information coming in, the latest parts of which it has been impossible either to check or assess.

It has been suggested that the purpose of this book was to present, upon all the evidence available, a comprehensive and objective picture of the government of Ethiopia of a kind that most visitors to that country have not given and, indeed, have not set out to give. Perfect objectivity is unobtainable, and would probably be undesirable if it were, but a writer can at least help his readers to assess the nature of his own subjectivity. Let me confess then—what will be obvious to some readers—that I cannot help but bring to this evaluation of the government of an African territory not only my unconscious British conceptions of government, but my conscious experience of studying European colonial administration of somewhat similar regions and peoples. More than that, I am aware that I have been influenced by a desire to correct the distorted picture of this country which it has been the object of some propaganda to build up in Britain. I see in this illusory picture a danger to the formation of sound policy. But for this it would not be necessary to point out at intervals that Ethiopia is not to be confused with Utopia; that it is not a united or homogeneous country, or that its government is not in all branches enlightened, efficient, and successful. The eager national self-consciousness of the ruling groups in Ethiopia to-day, a mood easy to understand in these first years of liberation and of strenuous reconstruction, would make it difficult, or at least ungenerous, for any of the few Europeans living in the country, still more those working directly or indirectly in its service, to write of its present affairs with the detachment that is possible in a university library. It is probable that my divergence from the unattainable mean of perfect impartiality may be on the side of being too exacting a critic of an African government struggling to civilize—or should we better say modernize?—its polity upon European lines.

A book of the kind this purposes to be clearly cannot please the propagandists—and it must be remembered that they stand at both extremes. It will be useless to state that the intention here is neither to encourage Ethiopians nor to denigrate them. All nations need the support of a private mythology, most of all when they are struggling to be born or reborn, but they should not expect other people to accept their illusions. The critics will certainly be able to find many errors of fact, since truth is an elusive quarry in Ethiopian studies, historical or contemporary, 'It is a country', it was said to me by one who knows it very well, 'of which it is impossible to speak the truth.' He was repeating what has been said or implied by other seekers after Ethiopian truth in many periods. We agreed that everything stated can be contradicted either because the opposite is also true of some region or of some aspect of the subject or because the truth is not known. One striking example, in the physical sphere, of the continuing European ignorance about Ethiopia away from the main centres and lines of communication may be given here. I have found it impossible, either from studying books or consulting living travellers and residents, to learn whether or for how long the mountains of Simen carry snow. Opinions conflict and no verification could be obtained. Ignorance of this kind could hardly be matched anywhere else in the world.

I would add to this that much of Ethiopian reality cannot easily be translated into European terms and concepts. Certainly I do not claim that the picture presented in the following pages, built up out of a mosaic of evidence from historical records, from contemporary documents and many living witnesses, is wholly accurate and I should welcome any corrections that informed readers can offer me. This book is a provisional and interim study; it will fulfil its purpose if it provokes the writing of a definitive work and if it fills the gap until that is done.

To Ethiopians who may read this book, and to the most eminent of them all, if his many cares should allow him to look at it, I would say that, whatever my detachment as a student, as a citizen of this contemporary and troubled world, with all my heart I wish their country well.

NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The spelling of Ethiopian words presents formidable difficulty. They have been freely converted by Europeans of many nationalities and for many centuries into forms that seemed good to them and some of these have obtained the authority of long use or misuse. The Royal Geographical Society has now given its instructions for some of the leading geographical terms; only experts in Amharic can give us guidance for the rest and they, when approached, do not always agree. It must be remembered that some of the place-names in use are non-Amharic words reaching us through Amharic. Generally speaking, I have followed the usual English compromise in such a difficulty, using Anglicized forms for words where these have become familiar through common use and endeavouring, with the help of the experts and within the limits of ordinary letters and accents, to use more correct forms for all other words. This results in unavoidable inconsistencies; for example, there is the use of Amharic forms, such as Ras Mikael for a name which has its English version, while in recognition of his wide familiarity in this guise the Emperor Tewodros is allowed to remain Theodore.

To turn to another question, it was necessary to provide a plural for the native words and it seemed simpler to endow them all with the letter s. The linguists will shudder at some of the results but would it not be a pedantic assumption to expect an English reader to guess that *debteroch* is the plural of *debtera*? Even here, however, I have not been wholly consistent. The plural of Dankali being the fairly well-known word Danakil, I could not bring myself to write 'Danakils'.

A few words about the maps. I have already said that the one of Ethiopia in 1935 is the work of Mr. de Halpert, based upon several authorities. We have had much discussion about the inset language map. There is not the evidence yet for a detailed and exact language map, still less for one showing races. Yet the present language map given here is an approximate indication of the ethnic groups in Ethiopia, and such a map, if used in the light of this caution, is indispensable to an understanding of Ethiopian history and present conditions.

This book, especially as regards the most recent period, owes a great deal to verbal evidence supplied by people with knowledge of Ethiopia. I have therefore a large tribute of gratitude to pay to those who endured my prolonged interrogation or who wrote me full and informative letters. I first began to collect such evidence long ago when, trekking by camel with Major H. Rayne along and across the invisible frontier of Ethiopia and British Somaliland, I drew upon his knowledge of Menelik's Ethiopia. On that same trek we camped and talked with Mr. C. H. F. Plowman, the British Consul in Harar before Haile Selassié's advent to power. In the middle thirties there were discussions with, among others, Mr. Frank de Halpert, Dr. John Melly, Colonel Lawrence Athill, Lt.-Colonel Arthur Bentinck, and the late Mr. George Steer. There was correspondence with the first two of these and further talks with them at the house of Lord Lugard, who was deeply interested in their respective anti-slavery and medical schemes. In the nineteen-forties, as the idea of the book developed, I had the advantage of meeting a considerable number of the political and military officers, advisers, Foreign Office officials, and others who had been most closely concerned with Ethiopian affairs. Many of these are not in a position to accept my published thanks; they know how grateful I am for their help and how much this book owes to them.

Fortunately there are others who cannot forbid me to refer to their services. I must speak first of Mr. Stephen Wright, the Rev. A. F. Matthew, and Dr. David Buxton. All of these spared time for long talks and also read most of the book in type. Mr. Wright has given me expert advice upon the perplexing problems of orthography, but he is not responsible for any instance where I have broken or forgotten his rules. To the Rev. A. F. Matthew, in addition to other help, I am especially indebted for authoritative comments upon the chapter on the Church. Colonel Lawrence Athill was most generous in laying his deep knowledge of Ethiopia open to the most ruthless exactions and communicated to me something of his own affection and hope for its people. With Mr. E. R. J. Hussey I spent much time in discussion and he read some of my typescript and helped me especially in obtaining reports, gazettes, etc. I obtained some extremely useful evidence from several members of the Friends' Ambulance Unit and especially from Mr. Sydney Bailey, Mr. E. Fitch, Mr. A. Tomlinson, and Mr. J. G.

Grimwade. Dr. S. F. Nadel gave Mr. de Halpert considerable help in making the language map. The late Mr. Charles Collier, formerly governor of the Ethiopian bank, was a most helpful informant. Professor H. Stanley Jevons and Miss Muriel Blundell of the Abyssinia (Ethiopia) Association helped me especially in obtaining reports, newspapers, etc. The Rector of Lincoln College (Mr. K. A. H. Murray) and Dr. Dunstan Skilbeck (Principal of Wye College) gave me similar indispensable help. Archbishop David Mathew supplied valuable information upon an obscure and important question and most kindly allowed me to see his own fascinating book in galley proof. Unfortunately, as my own book was then finished, this came too late for me to make the use of it I should have wished, though I was able to borrow one valuable reference from him. I have found it most interesting to compare his views of the Ethiopian monarchy with my own. Professor H. A. R. Gibb most kindly read the first historical chapter and Dr. C. K. Meek read the sections on land tenure to see if they were at all intelligible.

I wish to state, with much more than the conventional emphasis in such contexts, that none of the people I have mentioned above who gave me information or helped me in other ways has any responsibility for the selection and presentation of the facts, still less for any of the opinions I have formed. These are throughout entirely my own; the very wealth of evidence, some of it inevitably conflicting, would have necessitated this even if I had been intellectually very docile. One thing about nearly all European informants from Ethiopia that was most striking —I had indeed sometimes to take mental precautions against it—was the goodwill and determined hopefulness shown towards the country. There was a desire to find the best interpretation of the evidence and very often a devotion that deprecated the publication of any facts, however true, which might discourage or offend Ethiopians. The country has certainly been very fortunate in most of the Europeans who have served her in recent years, but there must have been qualities in the Emperor and his people which enabled them to seem so well worth serving.

Acknowledgment must be made to the Medici Society for permission to reproduce extracts from the book *The Queen of Sheba and her only son, Menyelek* by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, which they published. Thanks are also due to the International African Institute and especially to Miss M. A. Bryan for permission to consult before publication a map showing Ethiopian languages to which reference is made on Map 1.

Finally I must state my obligation to the Royal Institute of International Affairs for permission to refer to the unpublished report of 1941 and to reproduce some extracts from the sections contributed to it by Mr. de Halpert. In preparing the map of the provinces in 1935 Mr. de Halpert was able to work upon the sheet prepared by the Institute under his direction and for this courtesy also we wish to record our thanks.

Nuffield College
Oxford, *June* 1947

MARGERY PERHAM

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PART ONE

GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

THE NATURE OF THE COUNTRY

In the brief account of the government of Ethiopia which is to follow an attempt will be made to throw some historical light upon each of the institutions presented. Since, however, this will not give the reader any time-sequence into which to fit the references that will be made, he would be left with a flat picture, lacking in perspective. In this introduction, therefore, the main phases of Ethiopian history will be traced in outline. It will be governed by three purposes. It will show firstly how the peoples and territories of the modern empire were brought together under one government; what were the chief influences which acted upon these peoples, and what age and strength of tradition sanction their present institutions.

This is no easy task. The existence of Ethiopia was passed behind a double barrier of deserts and mountains and before the latest age it was only at certain periods—sometimes, it might almost be said, at certain moments—of her two thousand years of history that travellers from the civilized world threw a gleam of external light upon this otherwise fabulous kingdom. Its own chronicles, which begin in the later middle ages, are from the pens of monks and court historians; their form is conventional and their main purpose the laudation of kings. It is thus impossible to recount her history by giving chapters of proportionate length, and still less of proportionate historical value, to the centuries. Fortunately, for the modest purposes of this introduction, it is unnecessary even to attempt to be comprehensive.[1] Attention will, instead, be directed towards three main epochs in order to show, firstly, the origins of Ethiopia; secondly, her re-emergence, after centuries of historical obscurity, to meet the stimulus of European contact and the injuries of Muslim conquest; and, thirdly, that period of renewed contact with the outside world during the last hundred years which forms the immediate background to the reign of Haile Selassié.

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[1] Those who wish to study the history at greater length, but still briefly, should consult the excellent short *History of Abyssinia* by A. H. M. Jones and E. Monroe, 1935. There is, unfortunately, no satisfactory up-to-date standard history on a larger scale, which deals adequately with the latest period, that can be recommended to the general reader. A list of authorities containing several historical works will be found at the end of this book.

It has not been thought inconsistent with this selective brevity to make use here and there of those vivid details which are likely to impress themselves more strongly upon the imagination, especially if given in contemporary words, than summaries at second-hand. This, as we shall see, is the more necessary when treating of the early Ethiopia, since these quotations have sometimes come down to us in an isolation which makes it difficult to give them their full historical setting.

The peoples contained within the Ethiopian empire—for, as will be seen, empire is a proper term for this state—will most appropriately be described as they make their appearance in the story. But a short account of the physical character of the country, and especially of those strongly marked geographical features which have so deeply influenced its history, must precede the historical sketch.[1]

The governing influence of geography upon human society is never more clear than in regions where physical features show their most extreme characteristics and where, at the same time, the inhabitants have not developed the equipment to master them or at least to modify very greatly their effects.

The region which contains and immediately surrounds the present Ethiopia shows those extreme contrasts which great differences of altitude produce in tropical latitudes. Isolation is the main effect of the imperious and bizarre geographical conditions of Ethiopia. No-one who sees the country from outside its borders can resist using the metaphor of the mountain fortress. The historic core of the modern Ethiopia is to be found upon a lofty and fantastically broken triangular mountain plateau, lying between the 9th and the 15th degrees of latitude, with its base to the south. Further south the plateau extends, broadening this base, at a lower altitude but this region was a relatively recent addition to the empire. The cool, fertile, and well-watered northern heights, raised far above the arid and hot regions surrounding them, were the highly favourable setting for a very special way of life which marked off the inhabitants sharply from most of the peoples surrounding them.

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[1] This chapter is based mainly upon the following authorities: Maurette, F., vol. XII, part iii, of the *Geografie Universelle*, Paris, 1938; Fitzgerald, W., *Africa*, 1940 edition, pp. 451–71; Coulbeaux, J. B., *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Abyssinie*, Paris, 1929, vol. 1, pp. 1–25; Quaranta, F., *Ethiopia*, 1939, pp. 11 ff.; *Guida dell' Africa Orientale Italiana*, Milan, 1938, pp. 22–92.

The mountain stronghold would have made a clear natural demarcation for Ethiopia even if it had been surrounded by prosperous plains. But Ethiopia has experienced a double isolation. Her mountains are surrounded upon almost all sides by a further barrier of desert or semi-desert lowlands. There are not only the broad desert lands on the coastal and south-western sides but the desolate, almost unpopulated, Kenya frontier and the lowlands from Lake Rudolf to the Sobat river. Even north of this there is a harsh uncivilized margin along most of the Sudan frontier. The soldiers who from the south, the south-west and the north broke into Italy's East African empire in 1941 had, in spite of their mechanized transport and other advantages, dour experience of this surrounding no-man's land.

The geologists ascribe the great mountainous mass of Ethiopia to a series of eruptions which piled up trachyte and basalt formations into a vast jumble of peaks and chasms. These same eruptions, the last smoulderings of which have not yet completely died down, form the continuation of the great East African rift which, running north-eastwards from central Kenya to the Red Sea, slices off the south-west corner of the plateau. The fissure holds a chain of lakes and then runs north-east to form the valley of the Awash. The rift here bifurcates into the Red Sea and the deep, salty Danakil depression. A secondary and much less marked rift breaks away to the north-west to make the valley of the Sobat river.[1] The whole high plateau is on a tilt rising to its height on the east, where it stands almost sheer above the plains in a scarp of 3,000, and in some places 4,000, feet, while to the west and south it shelves down less abruptly to the plains of the Sudan.

The Ethiopians divide their own climatic regions into three, a rough classification which will be adequate for the present political study. Their terminology is as follows: the *dega*, or high, cold region, the *woina dega*, or the lower, cool region where the vine will grow, and the *qolla*, or low, hot region.[2]

The *dega*, the cold part, is to be found mostly in the northern half of the plateau, upon land ranging from about 7,500 feet to 15,000 feet. The loftiest ranges are found in Simen; in Bagemdir province; to the south of Tigré, and in Gojjam in the bend of the Abbai. The *dega* is the true Ethiopian country, where precipitous valleys cut district from district and even village from village, 'Valleys of Dreadful Depth', as a seventeenth-century writer calls them in his index. This country, if well defended, was in parts all but impenetrable until the latest inventions of weapons and transport. Except in the deep-cut valleys, where the atmosphere is hot and humid, the temperature is cool and equable, varying between 68 degrees Fahrenheit to some degrees of frost at the highest points though in the middle of the day it can be very hot even at 10,000 feet. The high country towards the east tends to be rather bleak and barren but becomes progressively more wooded towards the west. It is the cereal country, growing oats, wheat, and barley, but it carries also fine cattle and apparently, with its good pastures, it could carry many more. The cultivation generally ends at about 9,000 feet, though it can be seen even higher. The uplands bear a thick, short grass. This plateau has the immense advantage, in a continent over so much of which the rainfall is cruelly capricious, of receiving rain to an average of 45 inches or more a year, some of this falling in at least nine of the months. The period of heaviest rain, however, is from July to September, when the swollen rivers and streams have in the past always put an end to the campaigning season and make travelling very difficult.

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[1] Maurette, *op. cit.*, pp. 147 ff.

[2] These words are also used by Ethiopians to distinguish the many local variations of altitude within the two first regions. Thus even a small hot valley will be called *qolla*, and some would question the use of these terms by geographers in any wide general sense.

The *woina dega*, which ranges from the temperate to the sub-tropical lands, lies mostly to the south and covers the detached corner of the plateau, beyond the Awash, which centres upon the Harar ridge, and the hills of the Galla and Sidamo country running across to the west. This area in climate, appearance and fertility is the most attractive in Ethiopia. The valleys are more open than in the north, the hills are gentler, and there is more forest. If the north reminds Europeans of Switzerland, the *woina dega* recalls the countries bordering the northern shores of the Mediterranean. The height is between about 5,000 and 7,800 feet. In addition to the hardier cereals in the higher parts and European fruits and vegetables, the Mediterranean fruits can be grown with maize and, as the main economic crop, coffee which grows wild in the forests of Kaffa.

As in the cold parts, the temperate *woina dega* has an equable temperature and a rainfall even better distributed than in the north. It ranges from an average of 34 inches at Harar to double this and even more as the far west is reached: here the rainfall, at 50 to 70 inches, is at its highest in the country between Goré and Gambela. As we shall see, it was mainly in this promising climatic zone that Ethiopia made her conquests at the end of the nineteenth century.

The *qolla*, or hot region, is the dry or desert country in which

Ethiopia is framed. Much of Eritrea, with the Danakil, Somali and Boran country, comes under this name. This land is mostly below 5,000 feet and has the added disadvantage of being composed of poor, infertile sands weathered from gneiss and schist. Temperature hardly ever falls below 68 degrees Fahrenheit. Indeed, the coastal deserts are among the hottest lands in the world and the writer can testify from residence there in midsummer that the hot wind of the *khareef* strikes the face like the blast from an oven-door and drives the sand with searing effects upon European skin. Here the rainfall varies from practically nil on the coast to 5 or 10 inches as the land rises a little. The country carries more life as it reaches heights between 3,000 to 5,000 feet. There is a growth of mimosa thorn, and some patchy grass where the scanty rain collects while heavier growth fringes the margin of the dry channels where the rain-fed torrents run for a few hours before they vanish in the sand.

The *qolla* includes, however, the Galla-Somali plain which leads like a vast platform from the low, hot desert margin to the south-western massif and thus makes one of the easiest routes for invasion into the Ethiopian highlands. The *qolla* region should be suitable for the production of such tropical crops as cotton and bananas but the low rainfall, the lack of permanent water and the poor soil make cultivation almost unknown, except in a very few favoured spots, such as the lower Webbe Shibeli, where the Italians made some plantations. The *qolla*, therefore, remains a pastoral region, with the hardy fat-tailed sheep as the main product, while camels are used for milk and meat as well as for transport. Nomadism varies in degree according to the conditions but some movement from dry to rainy season pastures and water is imposed throughout. Human life within these rigorous conditions is scanty, shifting and poor. The struggle for survival develops the most strenuous physique, a strong discipline and a hard and grasping attitude towards competitors or intruders.

The physical conditions which divide Ethiopia from her borderlands do very little to assist communications on top of the plateau itself. Only their almost complete isolation from the outside world and the dangers it represented could have induced the Ethiopians to develop any measure of unity among themselves in a country so gashed and walled with physical divisions. The rivers are nearly all quite unnavigable. The great Abbai, the Ethiopian name for the Upper Blue Nile, circling round from Lake Tana, cuts an immensely deep channel round Gojjam province, leaping sometimes in cataracts from shelf to shelf on its way, and enclosed not only in its own bed, but in a ravine of cliffs and then again in a deep and generally precipitous valley choked with vegetation. The ancient trade route from Sennar and Nubia into the highlands, though it took this general direction, most certainly did not follow this formidable river-valley. It was only explored, and then with great difficulty, after somewhat abortive attempts in 1902 and 1905, by an expedition in 1920, and by others in 1927 and 1929 carried out by Major R. E. Cheesman.[1]

It is this river which is the main supplier of the Nile. Coloured by the rich sediment of the Ethiopian mountains, it first waters and enriches the Gezira irrigation area in the Sudan; joins the White Nile with dramatic colour effect at Khartoum and then goes on for nearly another two thousand miles to perform a second fertilizing service on a much larger scale for Egypt. The river and the Lake Tana from which it flows are therefore of the greatest interest to the two governments concerned. The Egyptians long ago realized that they drew their life from Ethiopia while the rulers of the mountains from time to time tried to exploit this reputed power in their diplomacy. Plans for diverting the Nile to punish or destroy Egypt were checked however by the consideration that the waters would probably flow into nearer deserts and there nourish Muslim enemies closer to home.[2]

The other western rivers also flow to the Nile basin, giving very little help to communications, though the Sobat river is navigable for part of the year a short distance into Ethiopia. In the south and east no rivers have a permanent flow to the sea except the Juba; the Awash, after coming out of its great gorge, ends in the lakes of Aussa.

Thus the rivers fail to assist trade and communications, and the escarpments hinder them. In spite of this, the isolation, though extreme, was never complete. In addition to the route up from Sennar along the Abbai, other routes led down from the plateau to the Eritrean coast at or near Massawa; more precariously through the Danakil desert, and to more than one port on the Somaliland coast.

To sum up, the Ethiopian plateau is, by the standards of surrounding parts of Africa, a highly favoured region, fertile, temperate, and well-watered, a setting prepared for the development of a civilization, but of one likely to be lonely and in-bred. The most marked characteristics of the plateau are, from without, its isolation and defensibility, and, from within, the great difficulty of communications. Any expansion over the encircling lowlands must mean the inclusion of lands uncongenial to the mountaineers and suited to a wholly different economy from theirs. Looking at Ethiopia on the larger map of the Middle East, it is clear that though its historic north faces the Red Sea and Asia, the bulk of the country is a part of tropical Africa and is, indeed, linked with some of the most barbarous and inaccessible regions of the continent, while Egypt and her civilization lie far beyond the half-desert regions of Nubia. In spite of the forbidding front which the Ethiopian massif turned east and north, it was really with Asia that its earliest contacts were likely to develop. Upon this side the most practicable ascents to its heights were up from the Eritrean coasts, where the mountains reach nearest to the sea, and across the Somali coasts up the slopes leading to Harar and so across the Awash to Shoa.

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[1] See Grabham, C. W., and Black, R. P., *Report of Mission to Lake Tana*, 1920–1; also Cheesman, R. E., 'The Upper Waters of the Blue Nile', *Geographical Journal*, vol. 71, no. 4, pp. 358–76.

[2] Jones and Monroe, pp. 2–3, and 117.

CHAPTER TWO

THE KINGDOM OF AKSUM

The history of Ethiopia may be said to begin in Arabia. The people who, at some time during the first millennium before Christ, crossed the Red Sea to colonize the highlands of the African horn were an off-shoot of the Semitic Sabaean civilization which flourished in the south-west of Arabia. Though its first coins are from the sixth or fifth centuries B.C. and its historical records run from about 150 B.C. to A.D. 350, this civilization had probably taken shape some 1,000 years B.C.

The emigrant Semites landed in a continent of which the north-eastern part appears to have been inhabited by the eastern group of Hamites, often called Cushites, who also include the Gallas, Somalis, Danakil, and Kaffas. The Hamites had probably already pushed most of the earlier negro groups back to the fringes of the modern Ethiopia. Since the Ethiopian civilization which resulted from this contact of Hamites and Semites was like the marriage of members of the same family, something must be said to explain their relationship. The words Semitic and Hamitic are, of course, linguistic terms and can only be applied to races with the knowledge that since language, like other cultural traits, can overflow the boundaries of race, these terms can never be exact. If, however, allowance is made for a large and variable margin of error, language can be taken as a rough guide and is, indeed, sometimes the only one available.[1] The Hamitic and Semitic language groups show so many affinities that it is generally accepted that the races speaking them branched from a common stem. Authorities differ as to whether this race, grandparent to the Ethiopians, originated in Africa or Asia.[2]

[1] Barton. G. A., *Hamitic and Semitic Origins*, Philadelphia, 1934, pp. 26 ff.

[2] Barton argues for north Africa against Professor C. G. Seligman, who favours Asia. See his *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, pp. 3–4.

Both groups are Caucasian and thus belong to the same branch of the human race as the great majority of Europeans. For this reason the Hamites are sometimes called Eurafrican. The further term Cushite is derived from the ancient name applied to parts of north-east Africa. The Hamites supplied pre-dynastic Egypt with its population, and remarkably pure representatives of this group are found to-day among the Beja and Beni Amer tribes who are neighbours to Ethiopia in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Eritrea. Both of these peoples, and especially the latter, with their light and graceful physique, wavy hair, fine eyes, and features which are clear-cut without being too sharp, appear, by our own European standards, strikingly beautiful types. Among other Hamites are the Berbers of North Africa and two more groups closely associated with Ethiopia on the east and south, the Somali and the Galla. Thus the basically Hamitic Ethiopians are largely surrounded by other Hamitic groups. To put Ethiopia in relationship with the rest of Africa, it must be remembered that successive waves of Hamites moving south and west have mingled with the negro peoples of Africa to produce the Bantu and other variations of Eurafrican-negro fusion which fill most of eastern, central, and southern Africa. The Ethiopian physical type, where it has not been modified by mixture of negro blood, is fairly tall, with the lower half of the body more developed than the trunk. The nose is generally well cut, the hair curly, the head long, and the general appearance Caucasian, the colour varying between brown and black.[1]

The Semitic branch from the common stem seems to have flourished first in south-western Arabia. Its most important extensions from here were represented by the Akkadians of ancient Babylonia, the Assyrians, the Canaanites, the Phoenicians, the Hebrews and, of course, the closely associated Sabaeans and Arabs. It is even claimed that Semites were responsible for the great Egyptian culture, but, even without this distinction, their record in the history of civilization is noble.[2] All the Semitic languages show a closer kinship with each other than can be traced amongst the probably older Hamitic languages.[3]

The Sabaean civilization began to develop in the south-west corner of Arabia just as the first known Arab kingdom, the Minaean, which had its focus further north, was in decline. Its rise can be traced by coins and inscriptions of the sixth and following centuries B.C. Its prosperity seems to have been founded largely upon trade, especially upon the trade in myrrh, cinnamon and cassia, and above all in incense, the valued produce of that undistinguished little tree which grows on the coasts of the two continents where they approach each other in this region and which became a necessity to the worship of the Egyptian temples. Though Saba, which is probably the Sheba of the Bible, gave its name to the civilization of this group of tribes, no single state gained lasting supremacy and power found successive centres. The most famous, perhaps, was Ma'rib, 4,000 feet high in the south-western hills, renowned for a great sluiced dam for water storage and irrigation.[1]

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[1] Conti Rossini, C., *Etiopia e genti d' Etiopia*, Florence, 1937, pp. 123 ff.

[2] Hitti, P. K., *History of the Arabs*, 1940, pp. 10–11.

[3] Barton, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

It is important to realize, in tracing the origins of the Aksumite kingdom, that the Sabaean was a high civilization for its period and one which, even allowing for some exaggeration, stands out in Greek records for its architecture, its economic resources and the wealth and luxury of its aristocracy.[2] The connection with Ethiopia can be traced by the relics of Sabaean settlements with their inscriptions and architectural and decorative forms which, crossing the sea, mark a route which can be clearly traced from Adulis on the coast to Aksum, a bare hundred miles away in a straight line, but 7,000 feet high in the mountains. Two Semitic tribes living on the opposite coast may have bequeathed their names to Ethiopia—Habashat, from which springs the Arab term Habash. This is still to be heard, generally in hostile terms, from the lips of the Somalis: while the Ethiopians themselves use the term Habasha. Its European form is Abyssinia.[3] The Agaziyan or Ge'ez tribe gave its name to the Semitic language which, developed from Sabaean by the emigrants, became the classical tongue of the new kingdom.

We do not know the exact date or the circumstances of this fruitful emigration. To judge by its astonishing achievements in what appears to have been a savage land it must have taken place when the Sabaean civilization was in its prime though it may have begun earlier. There are, indeed, archaeological remains which suggest that there were civilized emigrants in the region as early as 1000 B.C. Time must be allowed for the occupation of a sufficient area of what are to-day the highlands of Eritrea and Tigré to build up the conquering power and civic splendour of Aksum when it is first revealed to us in the opening centuries of our era.[4]

Before, however, we make any closer approach to this obscure kingdom it will be well to indicate its relationship with other neighbouring countries beside Sabaea, and so place it on the map of the ancient world.

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[1] Hitti, *op. cit.*, chapter 5.

[2] *Cambridge Ancient History*, 1934, vol. 10, pp. 248 ff.

[3] Another explanation of the word Habash is that it derives from the Arabic and denotes a 'mixed tribesman' and was given in scorn by the Arabs. The latest authorities reject this derivation.

[4] Blundell, H. W., *The Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia, 1769–1840*, 1922, p. vii.

To the student who turns for the first time to the origins of Ethiopia nothing is more surprising than the small degree to which these were influenced by the great civilization of Egypt. The explanation is found in the physical inaccessibility of Ethiopia and especially in the character and history of the region which lay between them. This, the modern Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, was the land of Cush to the ancient Egyptians and was later called Nubia by the Romans. We have seen that it was probably inhabited by Hamitic people, akin to the pre-dynastic Egyptians, who survive in the Beja and Beni Amer in the Red Sea littoral. But an irruption of negroes northwards in the third millennium B.C. gave a lot of trouble to the Egyptians who undertook three expeditions against them and, after the final one in 1879 B.C., set up an inscribed stone at Semna (fifty miles south of Wadi Haifa) forbidding any negro ever again to pass up the Nile beyond that point. Egyptian influence increased in the northern part of the Sudan during the next two thousand years, but the negro belt to the south acted as a barrier to its further penetration in that direction. A Nubian Hamitic dynasty, adopting the Egyptian religion, established an empire in the area centred in modern Merowe and from 740–660 B.C. conquered Egypt and became the XXVth dynasty. Expelled from Egypt in the middle of the seventh century B.C., the dynasty built up kingdoms founded first upon the old royal centre of Napata and then upon the 'island' of Merowe, the land enclosed between the Blue Nile and the Atbara. It thus brought a bastard Egyptian civilization to within two or three hundred miles of the nascent kingdom of Aksum.

This region about the middle Nile, the Egyptian Cush, became the Ethiopia of the classical world. This brings us at once to a confusion of terminology which it will be better to clear up at this point, even at the cost of a digression which must carry us far beyond the beginnings of Aksum. It will at least allow us to follow up the fate of Aksum's neighbour, the true ancient Ethiopia; to distinguish it from Aksum and to show how the latter took over the name.

The word Ethiopia—the land of the people with the burnt faces—was applied with the vagueness of geographical ignorance to the region immediately beyond the Egyptian frontier which was for long the frontier of civilization. There is evidence from Egyptian hieroglyphs of the seventh, twelfth and eighteenth dynasties that caravans had reached the Blue Nile, but neither in them nor in Nubian, Assyrian or Hebrew sources is there any evidence about the Aksumite kingdom. To Homer, the Ethiopians are simply the uttermost of men, the swarthy but blameless men who live beyond Thebes on the borders of the ocean stream. To Herodotus they live 'towards the rising of the sun.' Diodorus, Pliny, and Strabo, like Herodotus, all applied the name Ethiopia to Nubia. They do not seem to have known of the high tableland where Aksum had been founded.[1] The first inscription of the Aksumites, as we shall see, shows that they themselves applied the word Ethiopia to the territory on the middle Nile. Lying south-east of Ethiopia, they alone were in a position to be clear about the southern boundaries of their neighbour. Elsewhere the geographical vagueness was still apparent in the middle ages. Great difficulty was found in locating the realm of Prester John and it was even possible for some later writers to use the word Ethiopia when referring to India and other parts of Asia. Had not Vagie found the source of the Nile in India? 'Abash', Marco Polo recorded confidently, 'is a very large province and constitutes Middle India.'[2]

These were later vagaries. The true Nilotic Ethiopia, stimulated as we have seen by Egyptian influences, began to develop more historical identity of its own before the end of the ancient era and the names of Napata and Merowe came into use along with the general term, Ethiopia. As the nucleus of power and wealth moved south from the Egyptian border to Merowe, the cultural standards of Ethiopia showed signs of decline,[3] though there was some recovery in the third century B.C., when friendly relations were established with the Ptolemies in Egypt and Greek influence followed Egyptian up the Nile and reached the heart of the country. When the Romans took over the control of Egypt after the death of Cleopatra, hostilities broke out and in 23 B.C. Augustus sent down an expedition under Petronius which utterly destroyed Napata. This was the limit of a conquest which was not retained though Nero sent what must have been the first of those official geographical missions, which became so common in the nineteenth century, to discover the source of the Nile, a mission which enabled Pliny to give an account of Queen Candace in Merowe.

Candace appears to have been the generic title of the queens of Merowe and from this kingdom must have come the earnest eunuch, 'a man of Ethiopia' who, while studying Isaiah in his chariot, picked up Saint Philip by the wayside.[4] The first century was, however, one of decline. The civilization bequeathed by Egypt was threatened by negro infiltration from the south. The archaeological remains show a rapid descent in art and technique and the little pyramids that are still to be seen appear the very poorest relations of the great piles at Gizeh.[1] To-day, in the treeless flats of the Butana plain, which the writer has traversed, can be found the traces of this dying civilization running along one of the two routes which made hazardous links between the Ethiopia of the past and that of the future. By the fifth century A.D., probably as the result of the spread of the black Nuba from Kordofan, this region came to be called Nubia. The process of decline continued. The Nuba from the south-west, the Beja from the east and, as we shall see, the Aksumites from the south, all ravaged the island of Merowe. Communications between Ethiopia and Aksum must often have been broken. In the sixth century—two centuries later, it is interesting to note, than Aksum—Nubia became at least partially Christian, the most outstanding state now being that of Dongola. In the fourteenth century, the last Christian kingdom of Nubia was overrun from the north by the Arabs whose expansion over this region in Muslim tribal units meant an almost complete obliteration of the Ethiopian-Nubian civilization.[2]

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[1] Budge, E. A. W., *A History of Ethiopia*, 1928, vol. 1, pp. vii–viii.

[2] *The Travels of Marco Polo*, text of L. F. Benedetto translated by Aldo Ricci, 1932, p. 347.

[3] Reisner, G. A., 'Outline of the Ancient History of the Sudan', *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. 2, pp. 35–67.

[4] Acts of the Apostles, viii.

It was easy for the successors of the kingdom of Aksum, to whose country the word Ethiopia was already sometimes applied, to appropriate exclusively for themselves the word Ethiopia which they had begun to use some time after their own conversion. It was probably the immigrant Syrian monks who translated the Bible from Greek into Ge'ez who first applied Ethiopia to Aksum. The rulers and their clerks were naturally quick to seize upon such references to Ethiopia as they could find in ancient and holy writings which knew nothing of Aksum or Habashat, and these appropriations were duly entered into the canons and chronicles which they began to write about the fourteenth century. From then onwards travellers and writers could take their choice between the words Abyssinia and Ethiopia when referring to the mountain kingdom. The Latin writers generally chose the second form and those of Anglo-Saxon countries the first. In 1941, however, after the British reconquest of the country from the Italians, the Emperor decreed officially that the name was to be Ethiopia. This word has therefore been used throughout this book, except in this section of the historical introduction when the true ancient Ethiopia was still in existence and the forerunner of the modern Ethiopia was still the kingdom of Aksum. We may note that there has in recent years appeared in Ethiopia a tendency to extend the historical larceny of the medieval clerks and to endeavour to exalt the country by appropriating the new historical and archaeological knowledge of Nubian Ethiopia as they appropriated the biblical references.

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[1] Whitehead, G. O., 'Nagaa and Masawwarat', *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. 9, pp. 59–67.

[2] Crowfoot, J. W., 'Christian Nubia', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. 13, parts iii and iv, pp. 141–50.

This digression has been necessary partly to show why so little influence from the Mediterranean world reached Aksum and the later Ethiopia from Egypt by way of the Nile valley. It was also necessary in order to clear up one problem of terminology. Another, however, will confront us, which had better be dealt with at the same time. If, with the decline of the ancient Ethiopia, the writer can begin to apply this word to the Aksumites, he still needs a word with which to distinguish the ruling race from the numerous and heterogeneous peoples who are included in their modern Empire. For this purpose the word Amhara will be used. It is not very satisfactory, as Amhara, though it lay in the heart of modern Ethiopia, was, after all, but one province among others, and politically less eminent than Tigré or Shoa. Moreover, the peoples of the Tigré province in the north, part of which is in modern Eritrea, do not speak Amharic, but the older, kindred language of Tigrinya. Yet Amhara gave its name to the dominant language and to the culture of the ruling people, and the word for which there is no equivalent has been much used in this sense.

The main theme which has been interrupted by these digressions concerned the neighbours of Aksum. The old Nubian Ethiopia having been briefly described, something must be said of the relations with Egypt herself. In face of the difficulties of the land-route, such contact as there was had to be by sea. We know that as early as the third millennium before Christ the Pharaohs sent their ships down the Red Sea in search of slaves, incense, gold, ivory, ebony, and panther-skins. But it was the Greek Ptolemies who in the three centuries before Christ raised this commerce into a system based upon the great intellectual and economic centre of Alexandria. A series of stations was developed on the African coast of the Red Sea, the so-called coast of the Troglodytes, which ran from the region of Suakin to the Gulf of Tajura where Jibuti now stands. These stations were endowed with beautiful Greek names: there were Ptolemais Theron, some eighty kilometres south of Suakin, Cleopatra-Arsinoë, Philotera, and, in a sheltered arm of the sea a little south of the modern Massawa, Berenice Panchrusos, the All Golden, which under the name of Adulis was to become the main port of the Aksumite kingdom.[1]

An inscription made in this port about 240 B.C. and copied seven centuries later in circumstances which will be described presently, shows us one of the attractions of this coast for the Greek captains. Ptolemy III, in a list of his achievements, refers to an 'expedition into Asia with forces of infantry and cavalry and a fleet and elephants from the Troglodytes and Ethiopia, animals which his father and himself were the first to capture by hunting in these countries, and which they took down to Egypt where they had them trained for war.'[1]

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[1] Tozer, H. F., *A History of Ancient Geography*, 2nd edition, 1935, pp. 144 ff.

This demand from the Ptolemies for African elephants which were used against the Indian elephants of their Saleucid enemies, is referred to in the anonymous *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* some three hundred years later, that is, in the second half of the first century A.D. It speaks of a trading station, 'Ptolemais Theron, from which, in the time of the Ptolemies, their hunters set out to penetrate into the interior and capture elephants. This place was used for this purpose because it was upon the edge of the great Nubian forest in which elephants abounded. Before making a depot here for elephants, the Egyptian kings had to import these animals from Asia but as this source was precarious and the price of this importation very high, Philadelphus made very advantageous offers to the Ethiopians to induce them to give up eating these animals, or at least that they might reserve a certain number for the royal stables. But they rejected all these offers, declaring that, even if Egypt itself were offered in exchange, they would not renounce their favourite passion.'[2] There are several points of interest in this passage. It is difficult for anyone who knows the sandy wastes in the hinterland of the Red Sea coast to imagine a period when it was covered by a great forest harbouring elephants. The story rouses our admiration for the skill and enterprise of the ancients who transported these cumbrous animals in their small ships and broke them in for the uses of war. The passage will not, in view of what has been said of the location of Ethiopia at this time, be taken as the first reference to the notorious addiction of the Ethiopians even until to-day for raw meat. But, with this evidence about Greek trade along the coasts nearest to Aksum, we are coming very close to that kingdom.

Aksum, for all its nearness to their trade routes, was in little danger of conquest by Greece or Rome. The traders and sailors of Ptolemaic Egypt found it no more necessary to occupy the lands surrounding an emporium than did the seventeenth-century Europeans who established their trading stations on the west coast of the continent some eighteen centuries later. Rome made even less impression upon this region than Greece. She did not even succeed in making herself the full legatee of the Greek trade with the east, though it was partly with this object that Augustus sent a costly expedition in A.D. 24 into Arabia. The remnants of this force turned back exhausted from the Sabaean commercial centres to find their way again through the desert to their ships.

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[1] McCrindle, J., *The Christian Topography of Cosmas*, Hakluyt Society, 1897, pp. 57–8.

[2] Schoff, W. H., *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, New York, 1912, p. 60.

These, then, were the meagre contacts which the Sabaean outpost in the African mountains made northwards with the civilized world as represented by Arabia, ancient Ethiopia and Egypt. To the south and south-west was a vast, unpenetrated region of savage tribes and kingdoms, Hamitic and negro. It is only in the first century A.D. that Aksum makes historical entry into the ancient world with two pieces of evidence to which approximate dates can be given. The first evidence is drawn from inscriptions in Arabia and Aksum which show that, about the same time as the Roman expedition into Arabia, the Aksumites were already re-crossing, as aggressors, the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb over which they had come as emigrants. They had accepted an invitation from the Sabaean King of Sana to make war upon his neighbours of Saba and Raydan.[1]

The second piece of evidence from this century contains the first known reference by name to the kingdom of Aksum and the first historical name of a king. It comes from the *Periplus*, which described the Ptolemaic trading stations. The Greek author, who was writing a navigator's description of the coast for sailors, speaks of the port of Adulis and then goes on to state that eight days' journey into the interior lies the capital of the kingdom of Aksum through which came the ivory from the other side of the Nile—by which he probably meant the Takkazé—for export to Rome. From the islands around Adulis came tortoise-shell. The King was one Zoscales, who was 'miserly in his ways and always striving for more, but otherwise upright and acquainted with Greek literature.'[2] Thus the kingdom which was the forerunner of the modern Ethiopia first enters history, not gradually from the modest beginnings of a barbarian tribe, but as an established power sharing in the commerce and culture of the ancient world. It may be noted, as the first point in the long and controversial story of the Ethiopian claim to the Red Sea coast, that, though the Greek sailor ascribes a long strip of this coast to the government of Zoscales, yet ships were bound to anchor off the island of Adulis to escape the attacks of the barbarous natives of the mainland. Presumably at this time, as for most of the succeeding centuries, the highlanders were unable to incorporate or even subject the lowlands, so that trade between the mountain kingdom and the coast was a hazardous proceeding, only to be achieved by strong caravans.

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[1] Kammerer, A., *Essai sur l'histoire antique d'Abyssinie*, Paris, 1926, pp. 42–4. This is a very useful summary of the evidence available for the first eight centuries of Ethiopian history.

[2] Schoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–3.

We have now reached the first historical evidence of the existence of the kingdom of Aksum in the first century, and we must inquire what further evidence can be found to throw light on the character and fortunes of this kingdom.

This evidence is, unfortunately, very fragmentary. For the first few centuries it is drawn with difficulty from five kinds of sources. Firstly there are a few fragmentary references from the literature of the early centuries, the first of which, that in the *Periplus*, has been quoted. Secondly we have a handful of coins in gold and bronze bearing the crowned heads and names of kings in not always decipherable Greek. These are divisible from their symbols of the crescent and disk or the cross into a pagan and a Christian period.[1] Thirdly, and least satisfactory, there are the legendary lists, preserved in Ethiopia, of the earliest kings; these, however, show many discrepancies, both between each other and in relation to the evidence from other sources. Fourthly, we have about a dozen inscriptions, mostly in Sabaean, which cannot always be accurately dated. Fifthly we have the archaeological remains in Eritrea and Ethiopia. It is difficult, therefore, even for the purpose of such an introductory outline as this, to hazard a brief summary of the history of these early centuries since each name and date would be a matter for discussion. Yet, in spite of the paucity of the record and the almost complete absence of chronology, the archaeology and the inscriptions offer a vivid, almost an intimate, impression of the great kings of Aksum. A brief reference will therefore be made to these two sources of evidence.

We owe to a German archaeological expedition to these ruins of Aksum a report in four volumes with characteristically thorough descriptions and hundreds of photographs, drawings, plans, and reconstructions.[2]

In this still holy city the broken stones of a civilization dating from some 2,000 years ago are scattered about the fields and among the wattle and daub huts of the present inhabitants. They include the site of a great palace 120 by 80 metres in size, with stone walls and terraces and a central structure, according to the archaeologists' reconstruction, of several stories.[3] There are the remains of a group of fourteen thrones, of a characteristic Aksum style, built upon high cubic platforms. They rested upon pillars and seem to have been surmounted by canopies.[1] The great statues mentioned in inscriptions as having been set up, like the thrones, in commemoration of victories have disappeared, but the base for one such statue has been found with deep settings for feet nearly 40 inches long. But the most famous relics are the great monolithic steles. A group of three still stands, but most of them lie broken in pieces in a field: parts of some have been built into walls and one has a house upon it. These steles are unique in shape and decoration; they appear to owe nothing to Egypt, Greece or Rome, but a little, perhaps, to Sabaea. They carry a deeply incised design of doors at the base; there are tiers which are like stories, while at intervals appear the representations of windows and also a circular pattern which suggests the round ends of roof-poles.[2] Though they resemble memorial steles and also, though with immensely exaggerated slenderness, the high, many-windowed towers of south-east Arabia, they are, in the main, of original and surprising design. Some of the steles end in a crescent and disk symbol which is found widely at this period in connection with the worship of Astarte. But perhaps the most remarkable thing about the steles is their height: the largest measures 33 metres, which is one metre higher than the giant Egyptian obelisk now in Rome to which, we may note, it does not seem to owe its inspiration. The biggest monolith still standing measures 21 metres above the ground with 2 metres beneath. It was reported some years before the Italian invasion to be in danger of following its companions to the ground.

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[1] Kammerer, pp. 135 ff. and plates.

[2] Littmann, E., etc., *Deutsche Aksum Expedition (1905–6)*, 4 vols., Berlin, 1913.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 112 ff. There is an impressive pictorial reconstruction of this palace.

For an appreciation of this civilization which flourished during the first six centuries A.D. we can at present do little more than allow our imaginations to play upon these remarkable relics, estimating the degree of security, wealth, creative boldness and technical skill to which they attest and remark that, but for the Sabaean affinities, they represent an indigenous civilization which owes little or nothing to the great cultures of Egypt, Greece or Rome. The present conclusion by the leading archaeological student of the evidence is that 'we are faced with a unique, self-contained architecture, the dependence of which upon other known examples is difficult to trace. We are confronted with something as yet inexplicable.'[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 45. Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du règne de Ménélik II*, edited by M. de Coppet, 2 vols, Paris, 1931, vol. 2, pp. 557–9. The great value of this book lies in the voluminous notes and appendices by M. de Coppet, former French minister in Ethiopia.

[2] Dr. Buxton has recently examined an ancient Tigrean church which shows clearly the method of construction which produced window-like friezes, with both round and square timber ends projecting on the outside. The effect of this form of construction, which was also found in southern Arabia, is copied in stone in the Aksum steles. Buxton, D.R., 'Ethiopian Rock-Hewn Churches', *Antiquity*, June 1946, pp. 60–9.

We turn now to consider some of the main inscriptions and references which throw occasional light upon the kings of this impressive capital city and show some little of what they were doing in the centuries under review. The inscriptions inevitably tell us of conquest, the main boast of kings. The one which is probably the first in time of the important inscriptions was found at Adulis by that same sixth-century Cosmas who recorded the Ptolemaic inscription given above. The facts of his discovery are worth describing. Cosmas was a Christian merchant, probably from Alexandria, who combined geographical with theological studies and whose resulting book is known as *The Christian Topography*. His main intention was to disprove the pagan theory that the earth was spherical but in building up his fantastic geographical theories he seems to have made use of sound geographical facts. 'On the coast of Ethiopia', he writes, 'two miles off from the shore is a town called Adule, which forms the port of the Axômites and is much frequented by traders who come from Alexandria and the Elanitic Gulf. Here is to be seen a marble chair, just as you enter the town on the western side by the road which leads to Axômis. This chair appertained to one of the Ptolemies who had subjected this country to his authority. It is made of costly white marble such as we employ for our marble tables.' He then describes the throne and the tablet that was with it in great detail. 'Now when I was in this part of the country, about twenty-five years, more or less, from the beginning of the reign of the Roman Emperor Justinus, Ellesbaas, who was then king of the Axômites, and was preparing to start on an expedition against the Homerites on the opposite side of the Gulf, wrote to the Governor of Adule directing him to take copies of the inscriptions on the chair of Ptolemy and on the tablet and to send them to him. Then the Governor, whose name was Abbas, applied to myself and another merchant called Mênas . . . and at his request we went and copied the inscriptions. One set of the copies was made over to the Governor; but we kept also like copies for ourselves which I shall here embody in this work, since their contents contribute to our knowledge of the country, its inhabitants. . . . Here is the form of the Chair and of the marble, and Ptolemy himself.'[2]

Cosmas refers here to the drawings with which he illustrated his work. His little sketch of Adulis shows an interesting variety of architectural forms, gabled buildings, a square tower, a round arch, and some of the characteristic Aksumite tiered erections. The throne looks most impressive in his drawing.[1] He then gives the Ptolemaic inscription on the tablet, which he thus preserved for history and which has already been given. Next he gave the inscription on the chair. This he was, of course, quite wrong in imputing to Ptolemy as a continuation of the other, since this strange throne and its inscription were Aksumite. This inscription is of the greatest interest and will be given in full.[2] '. . . and having commanded the peoples who live near to me to keep the peace, I waged war fiercely and overthrew the following peoples. I fought the Ge'ez (or Agazi) people, and the Agamé and the Sogaet, and when I had vanquished them I set apart the one half of their possessions and of their inhabitants as my share. I overthrew Ava and the Zingabene and Angabo and Tiamo, and the Atagau and the Kalaa, and after crossing the river I conquered also the Semen, a people who live on the other side of the Nile [the Takkazé] among inhospitable mountains that are covered deeply with snow, having frozen snowdrifts everywhere, and deep snow in which men sink up to their knees. Then I overthrew the Lasiné, and the Zaa, and the Gabala, who live in a range of mountains, from the sides of which springs of hot water gush forth and pour down the sides of the mountains. Then I overthrew Atalmo, and the Beja and all the people who camp round about them. And having overthrown the Tangautoor, who occupy the country as far as the frontier of Egypt, I turned away from my own territories and marched to Egypt. Then I fought with the Anninés and the Métinés, who live on precipitous mountains, and the people of Sesea, who had fled to a very high and impassable mountain. I camped round about them and made them prisoners, and I took what I wished for of their young men and young women, and their youths and maidens, and all their possessions. I overthrew the peoples of Rhauzi, who live in districts in the interior with the Barbarians who traffic in incense on vast waterless plains, and the people of Saulaté, and I commanded them keep guard over the sea-beaches. When I had fought and overthrown in battles, wherein I myself took part, all these peoples who were protected by mighty mountains I permitted them all to keep their lands as tributaries. Now the grea number of these people submitted to me voluntarily and paid tribute I sent a naval force and soldiers against the Arrhabites and the Kinaidokolpites who live on the other side of the Red Sea, and when I had overthrown all their kings, I commanded them to pay tribute for their country, and to go about their business by sea and land in peace. I made war from Leuké Komé to the land of the Sabaeans. All these peoples have been conquered by me, the first and only one of the kings who were before me, through the grace which (I have found) before my august god Ares who has also begotten me, and who has made subject to my sovereignty all the peoples who adjoin my land in the East as far as the Land of Incense, and in the West as far as the lands of Ethiopia and the Sasou, some against whom I myself marched and fought, and some against whom I sent [troops]. And having established peace in all the world which has been conquered by me, I have come to Adulis to offer up sacrifices to Zeus and Ares, and to Poseidon on behalf of the seafaring folk. And having collected and gathered together my troops, I establish this throne on this spot and offer it to Ares as a pledge in the twenty-seventh year of my sovereignty.'

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[1] Littmann, vol. 2, p. 120. See also Kammerer, p. 135.

[2] McCrindle, *op. cit.*, pp. 54 ff.

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[1] The sketches are reproduced in Kammerer, opposite p. 12.

[2] Budge, vol. 1, pp. 238–9, and Kammerer, pp. 56–9. Budge gives the place-names in Greek in his translation, but for purposes of this quotation the translated forms given either by Budge or, failing him, by Kammerer, have been inserted.

We have here a picture of a king expanding in all directions from the nucleus of his own principality round Aksum. It is impossible to identify all these names but enough of them are clear to show that his power was still not established even just south of the Takkazé (which he calls the Nile), since he was struggling to subdue the neighbouring Simen, with its snowy heights,[1] and other groups closely surrounding Aksum and some even in Tigré itself. But in spite of these difficulties at home he claims to have thrust much further afield, south-east to the dry coastal, incense bearing plains which cannot be exactly located, and north and east against the Beja, those handsome nomads who scourged the fringes of civilization from the days of the Pharaohs to those of Lord Kitchener. He claims, it will be noticed, to have secured communications with Egypt and to have launched another expedition against Arabia, probably in the present area of Aden.

It is, of course, difficult to say how far these wide claims to victory are exaggerated. They may refer not to conquests, however temporary, but merely to the king's most successful raids. To judge by the military and administrative equipment of the period and by the obvious uncertainty of the power of Aksum in regions closely neighbouring the city, it seems extremely unlikely that there is much substance in any later claim that Aksum was the centre of an empire stretching from Arabia to the Nile, if by that is meant the Blue Nile where it flows through the present Sudan, still less, of course, if the White Nile is implied. We must ask, too, what is meant by the word empire when it is applied to the conditions of this period. That Aksum made her power felt at this time across a wide area, punishing, pillaging, and at times exacting tribute, may be accepted. It also seems that the kings of Aksum retained some hold upon part of south-western Arabia for about sixty years or more of the late third and early fourth century, though, like some later monarchs, they long afterwards retained past glories to give present lustre to their titles.[1]

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[1] The account of the snow in this inscription is vivid. There are, however, no records of snow on Simen in modern times.

It will be noticed that not only does one king use Greek for his inscription but that he worships the Greek gods, Zeus and Poseidon. He also claims descent from Ares whom the Aksum dynasty adopted as their special deity, sometimes under the native form of Mahrem, unless, indeed, they simply gave a Greek name to their own god. He chose, moreover, his coastal city as the site for his commemorative throne and sacrifices on behalf of all who voyage on the sea. The king of Aksum, with one foot on the Tigrean mountains, has still the other precariously planted beside the salt water and his face turned more aggressively towards Arabia than towards the African hinterland.[2]

It is significant of the obscurity that covers this part of the world in the first centuries A.D. that, for all the detail in this inscription, it has proved impossible to give it a date or even to say by which king, of those named in early lists or upon the coins, it was inscribed. Authorities have differed as to date all the way between the first and the fourth centuries, but the Italian scholar Conti Rossini inclines to the view that the king was Aphilas and the date between A.D. 277 and 290.[3]

The next important inscription takes us into the succeeding century and for the first time on to firm historical ground. Here we encounter a king known to the records of the outer world as Aezanas who, contemporary with Constantine, reigned from A.D. 325 to 350. Several of his inscriptions have been found engraved upon the stone panels of the royal thrones of Aksum. A sudden revealing light is thrown upon the cultural situation by the fact that some of these are in Greek, some in Sabaean and some in ancient Ethiopian, which we may call Ge'ez, though, like Sabaean, it had still not been endowed with vowel signs and is, therefore, both on stones and on coins, very difficult to interpret. These inscriptions relate to a long series of campaigns. Many of the proper names cannot be identified, but it is interesting to note that much of the fighting was still in the immediate neighbourhood of Aksum although, again, other campaigns much further afield are described.[4]

[1] Kammerer, pp. 56–9.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] See the evidence summarized by Kammerer, pp. 59–60.

[4] These inscriptions are all listed and described in Littmann, vol. 4. See also Kammerer, chapter viii, for translation of some of these into French.

One inscription describes a campaign against unidentifiable tribesmen who had murdered a caravan of merchants, at the successful conclusion of which fifty prisoners and a hundred beasts were offered to Mahrem.

Two of these inscriptions are worth noting. One is especially interesting in that it is inscribed in all three languages, Greek, Sabaean, and Ge'ez. It was discovered at Aksum by the English traveller, Henry Salt, in 1809, upon a stele. In this Aezanas claims in his title to be king of the Sabaean provinces (though these were, in fact, now lost) and also of the ancient Ethiopia. We find in this inscription also a title that was to be of great fame, though of rather ill-omen, in the future history of the dynasty. 'We, Aezanas, king of Axum, of Himyar, of Raidan, of Saba, of Salchin, of Siyamo, of Beja, and of Kaso, king of kings, son of the unvanquished Ares.' He then goes on to recount a campaign fought by his two brothers against the rebellious Beja and gives figures, which are modest for this species of literature, of some 4,000 prisoners and numbers of sheep and cattle. The inscription strikes a strong note of humanity and self-righteousness as the king recounts in detail how these prisoners were treated. 'My brothers gave them to eat of meat and corn and to drink of beer and wine and water, all of them to satiety, whatever their number. . . . And after having given these prisoners all the means of subsistence and after having dressed them, we settled them by force in a part of our country called Matlia. And we gave further orders that they should be supplied with goods and we allotted to each chief of 25, 140 head of cattle. In sign of gratitude to Him who begat us, Ares the unconquered, we have set up statues to Him, the one of gold and the second of silver, and three others of bronze, to His glory.'

Is it justifiable to read into this a tribute from this still pagan king to the standards of a new religion which was already penetrating his country as it was already reaching those of neighbouring rulers? The next inscription to be noted, the most interesting of all, may give the answer. It relates to a very ambitious expedition into the ancient Ethiopia. It must have been the weakness of Merowe to which we have already referred which tempted King Aezanas to the attack. The inscription is important for the history of both countries; it reveals the strange symbiosis of black negro and 'red' Eurafrican in Merowe which is to be found at many times and in many parts of that line across Africa where the two races and cultures have met. The story, like others in the Aksum inscriptions, is vivid. The king describes how the Nubians had revolted and become arrogant towards the Aksumites. '"They dare not pass the Takkazé," they said. The black Nubians fought with the red: after they had broken their word twice and thrice and after they had put their neighbours to death without mercy, and after they had pillaged our messengers and envoys which I had sent to them to admonish . . . then I embarked upon a campaign.' After defeating his enemies on the Takkazé he followed them up for twenty days; 'at the same time I burned their towns; both those with walls of stone and those of straw; my people took from them their corn, their minerals, their iron and bronze and they destroyed the idols contained in the houses and also their stores of corn and cotton and they threw them into the river Seda' (the Blue Nile). 'Many lost their lives in the water: I do not know the number. At the same time my people holed and overturned their boats which carried a crowd of men and women. And I captured two guides which had come as spies mounted on camels, and named Yesaka and Butala.' He gives many other details of the campaign and then claims that his armies marched still further north, 'the troops penetrated as far as the land of the red Nubians and my people returned safely after having taken prisoners and booty and killed the enemies of the power of the Lord of Heaven. And I set up a throne at the junction of the rivers Nile and Takkazé opposite this peninsula. And behold this is what the Lord of Heaven has given me: prisoners, men 214, women 415, a total of 629; killed, men 602, women and children, 156, or a total of 758; and adding together the prisoners and the killed, 1,387. The booty amounted to 10,560 head of cattle, and 51,050 sheep. And I set up a throne here in Sado by the power of the Lord of Heaven who has aided me and given me supremacy. May the Lord of Heaven strengthen my supremacy. And now that he has conquered my enemies for me may he continue to conquer for me wherever I go. Now that he has conquered for me and subdued my enemies for me, I desire to reign in justice and equity without doing any injustice to my peoples.'[1]

Many comments could be made upon this valuable inscription. For the most part, however, it tells its own story while, for our purposes, it has one overriding interest. It shows that the pagan Aezanas, the son of Ares, has changed his religion and, as he says in one place, recognizes that the Lord of Heaven has given him power. We are not, however, left with only this engraved evidence, reinforced as it is by that of the coins, for what, even in its political implication alone, was the most important event in the history of Ethiopia. We have an account, which is accepted by scholars as authentic, by Rufinus, who wrote in the fourth century.[2] He describes how Meropius, a philosopher of Tyre, went on a voyage to see the world, and took with him two small boys, his relations, Aedisius and Frumentius, whom he was educating in humane studies. 'When having seen and taken note of what his soul fed upon, the philosopher had begun to return, the ship on which he travelled put in for some water or some other necessaries at a certain port. It is the custom of the barbarians of these parts that, if ever the neighbouring tribes report that their treaty with the Romans is broken, all Romans found among them should be massacred. The philosopher's ship was boarded: all with himself were put to the sword. The boys were found studying under a tree and preparing their lessons and, preserved by the mercy of the barbarians, were taken to the king.' This king was Ella Amida, the father of Aezanas. 'He made one of them, Aedisius, his cup-bearer. Frumentius, whom he had perceived to be sagacious and prudent, he made his treasurer and secretary. Thereafter they were held in great honour and affection by the king.' After his death the queen besought them with tears to stay and help with the government during her son's minority. 'While they lived there and Frumentius held the reins of government in his hands, God stirred up his heart and he began to search out with care those of the Roman merchants who were Christians and to give them great influence and to urge them to establish in various places conventicles to which they might resort for prayer in the Roman manner. He himself, moreover, did the same and so encouraged the others, attracting them with his favour and his benefits, providing them with whatever was needed, supplying sites for buildings and other necessaries, and in every way promoting the growth of the seed of Christianity in the country.'

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[1] This has been taken from the French version given in Kammerer, pp. 95–7.

[2] The quotation is given in full in Jones and Monroe, pp. 26–7.

When the king grew up, in spite of his entreaties, the two insisted upon leaving the country. Frumentius went to Alexandria and told the whole story to Saint Athanasius, who had just been appointed bishop. The saint called a council and consecrated Frumentius, sending him back to continue his work of conversion. 'And when he had arrived in India' (i.e. Aksum) 'as bishop, such grace is said to have been given him by God that apostolic miracles were wrought by him and a countless number of barbarians were converted by him to the faith.' Rufinus then states that he heard the story from Aedisius himself who had not returned to Aksum with his kinsman. He could not, therefore, tell the full sequel, with the conversion of the king Aezanas. This is revealed not only by the inscription about the Merowe expedition and by coins, but also by the record of a letter from Constantine to the now Christian Aezanas, the unsuccessful object of which was to win him for the Arian heresy.

The chance that took Frumentius to Alexandria instead of back to Tyre with Aedisius, and on, perhaps, to Byzantium, was momentous for the country. It was the beginning of that unbroken connection, up to our own day, with the Coptic Church in Egypt and of the rule, confirmed by a Coptic forgery of a pretended canon of the Council of Nicaea, that the Ethiopians must accept a head chosen by the Patriarchs of Alexandria and that this ecclesiastic himself should have no authority to consecrate bishops.

The Ethiopian Church thus became in practice a province of the Egyptian Coptic Church. In the first century, however, of the Ethiopian Church, Christendom was a unity even though, as between the Greek, Latin, Syrian and Egyptian branches, there were diversities naturally springing from the variety of national cultures upon which Christianity had been grafted.[1] The Egyptian Church under Athanasius was, indeed, the great bulwark against the Arian and Nestorian heresies. In the attempt of the theologians in the fourth and fifth centuries to define the mystery of the Incarnation, a rift developed between the eastern branch of the church on one side and the Greek and Latin branches on the other. The latter regarded Christ as uniting within Himself two natures, divine and human. The eastern fathers, in their extreme reaction against the Nestorian heresy, asserted the monophysite belief that the two natures were fused into one. The decisive break took place at the Council of Chalcedon in 451: this left the Greco-Latin Church upon one side, itself destined to later fissures, while the Syrian, Armenian and Egyptian Churches, sharing the monophysite doctrine, became independent.

The Ethiopian Church took little part in the controversy, but it followed its parent church in Egypt and the resultant isolation from the rest of Christendom had a profound effect upon the national religion and so upon the national character. This will be discussed further in the chapter upon the church. We may notice here, however, that the commercial links with Syria, illustrated by the story of the conversion, and reinforced by theological affinity, encouraged Christian influences from this region. There is, for instance, the tradition of the Nine Saints who arrived in Ethiopia about A.D. 500; they are said to have founded monasteries and translated the scriptures into Ge'ez and it was they who probably first spread the monophysite doctrine. It was probably at this early date that the monasticism which flourished in such an extreme form in Egypt and Syria began to influence the young church.

Monsieur Kammerer maintains that the early and rapid Christianization of Aksum—which we may now begin to call Ethiopia—was mainly due to the adoption of the faith for reasons of policy by the rulers as they saw the power of the Byzantine emperors spreading to the east.[1] After the sudden lifting of the curtain upon Ethiopia in the fourth century, the country again falls into almost complete obscurity during the fifth century, but in the middle of the sixth another king emerges, Ellesbaas, who, as shown mainly in the not very satisfactory Byzantine and Arab records, appears as the ally of Byzantium and the champion of Christianity. At this time the Jews, many of them in exile from their own country, were asserting themselves against those rulers in Arabia who had adopted Christianity. It was at the moment when Ellesbaas was preparing an expedition which conveniently combined his ancient claims with his new religion that Cosmas called in at Adulis and was asked to translate the Greek inscriptions.

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[1] See the very interesting introduction by Canon S. A. Douglas to *The Teaching of the Abyssinian Church*, translated by A. F. Matthew, 1936; also O'Leary, de L., *The Ethiopian Church*, 1936, pp. 27 ff.

The record of the *Periplus* and of Frumentius both show how unsettled conditions tended to be on the Eritrean coast. The Byzantine story of the expedition of Ellesbaas to Arabia reveals how completely the Aksumites had lost their power on the Red Sea. The Greeks had to provide the whole of the fleet to transport the expedition. It was, however, successful and Ellesbaas defeated the leading Judaizing kinglet, restored Christianity and left several governors to hold the country in his name. It appears that some of them soon asserted their independence but at this point the story is taken over by the Arabs and its outlines distorted by fantasy. We may notice here, however, that this contact with Jewish Arabia and the influence, perhaps, of Jewish penetration earlier had important cultural influences upon Ethiopia, and especially upon her religious customs. Hebraic beliefs were so deeply implanted upon one northern group, the Falashas, that they have continued until our own times to observe the Old Testament ritual and beliefs, though they know no Hebrew and are of the local Hamitic stock.

The restoration of Ethiopian influence on Arabia was not to last. The power of the Sassanid Persians suddenly threatened Arabia and the eastern empire. The Byzantines record a last attempt at co-operation with Ellesbaas and we learn that one of his sons reigned in Aksum and the other in south-west Arabia. After that, by the end of the sixth century, the Persians appropriated Arabia for their empire, only to fall themselves before the explosion of Arab conquest which burst over the near-eastern world under the inspiration of Mahomet. The great breaches in eastern Christendom left its frontiers almost helpless before the attack. Egypt and Syria were quickly overrun. The Ethiopians disputed the command of the Red Sea for a time but by the eighth century it had become a Muslim channel and Adulis had been destroyed. High up in the mountains the Aksumite nucleus of Ethiopia was, for the time being, safe, but if its conversion to Christianity was the greatest influence which went to its making, the second in importance was the almost complete isolation from the rest of the Christian and civilized world in which she was fated to pass the next eight centuries of her history.

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[1] Kammerer, pp. 103–4.

It is thus possible, by piecing together many fragments of different kinds of evidence, to obtain some picture of this kingdom which flourished from at least the first to the seventh centuries. It drew mainly upon Sabaean, Greek, and Syrian culture, and threw up ambitious kings who built a unique and astonishing city, minted a beautiful gold and bronze coinage and led armies to victory on the middle Nile and overseas to the home of their fathers in Arabia. The glimpses we get of this kingdom are tantalizing in their inadequacy. If the words used of the heavenly city may be applied to one lofty, indeed, in altitude but profane and, indeed, for much of this period, pagan:

Those shaken mists a space unsettle
Then round the half-glimpséd turrets slowly wash again.

It may be hoped that the work begun by scholars will be carried further in years to come and that the turrets of Aksum may acquire a firmer outline.

CHAPTER THREE

ISOLATION AND REDISCOVERY

In this chapter we can pass quickly over Ethiopia's obscure middle ages to reach the next period which offers external evidence about her affairs, one which covers some 200 years of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This evidence, unlike most of that we have been considering, is of great value and considerable detail. It refers to a period in which in this conservative country institutions had taken a shape which changed little until the present century; we shall, therefore, in our study of institutions frequently look back to the records of this period. This introduction, therefore, will give no more than a brief outline of events in order to provide a chronological setting for these references.

The centuries between the seventh and the fifteenth may be summarized in a few pages. In the words of Kammerer, 'Abyssinia re-enters for centuries into a twilight more complete than any other country has known':[1] another French historian calls the period succeeding the rise of Islam 'centuries of historical night'.[2] Gibbon, employing some licence in order to achieve one of his impressive generalizations, writes, 'Encompassed on all sides by the enemies of their religion, the Æthiopians slept near a thousand years, forgetful of the world, by whom they were forgotten.'[3]

It is possible, however, to reconstruct in broad outlines—partly from Arabic sources, especially in Egypt, partly from the royal chronicles, the first of which were written in the fourteenth century, and partly by retrospect from later records—the main developments of this period. It was certainly marked by decline from the height reached by Aksum.

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[1] Kammerer, p. 120.

[2] Coulbeaux, vol. 1, p. 203.

[3] Gibbon, E., *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, edited by J. B. Bury, 1909, vol. 5, p. 165.

The decline may not have been so complete as some historians believe since we must allow for the erasing violence of a later conquest, but with one or two exceptions, to be mentioned presently, archaeology has revealed no more relics of fine stone buildings comparable with those of Aksum. There are no more inscriptions proclaiming the great deeds of kings. The use of coinage dies out. A slender thread of contact with the outer world is retained through the occasional importation from Egypt of a new Coptic metropolitan. The Ethiopian rulers, however, were not idle. We have seen that the kingdom of Aksum was limited, in spite of campaigns much further afield, to the region of modern Eritrea and Tigré. Cut off, at least for most of this period, from the coast and so from the lure of their old Arabian ambitions, the rulers concentrated their energies upon extending their kingdom southward over an open frontier, overrunning and assimilating the Hamitic-speaking peoples in their way. This increasing dilution of the original Sabaean stock and culture may have been partly responsible for the decline in civilization.

While we cannot reconstruct the number and character of Hamitic tribes which the Ethiopians conquered and absorbed, we can identify the Agaus, a word which is used to cover several language groups, since they figure largely in Ethiopian history and covered an extensive region. Indeed, considerable numbers of them to-day still retain their tribal identity and language, which appears to be a pure Hamitic tongue.

Wars with the Agaus were prolonged by the difficult and mountainous country. It would be possible to piece together a great deal of scattered information from the records of the later travellers underlining the continuing separate identity of these Agau groups. As we have no early accounts we must reconstruct from later evidence what must have been happening in the middle ages. We know, for example, that as late as the early sixteenth century Damot was still 'a great country and kingdom', and a pagan one, though Christianity was beginning to enter it.[1] Tellez during the next century recounts how the Agaus, with the help of the difficult country to which they had for the most part retreated, were able to maintain themselves, cutting narrow, twisting paths in the forests which they barred with tree trunks, or hiding in caves with narrow entrances. 'The Agaus looked upon war with the Abyssinians as a less Evil than Peace, because they did them little Damage in War, and their oppression was great in Time of Peace.'[2] When hard pressed, however, in the early seventeenth century, they persuaded Father Paez to intercede and get good terms for them. They were said at this date to be distinguished from the Ethiopians by their lighter colour—perhaps due to a lesser mixture of their blood with that of negro slaves—and by their greater addiction to sorcery.[1] Bruce has much to say of the Agaus and their customs, while Krapf tells us that one group, the Kamant, in spite of being baptized, were still regarded as heathen by the Amharas because they held services in the forests and revered the cactus, to which they ascribed a soul.

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[1] Alvarez, F., *Narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Abyssinia, 1520–7*, Hakluyt Society, 1881, pp. 347–8.

[2] Tellez, B., *Travels of the Jesuits in Ethiopia*, 1710, p. 210.

There are later glimpses of the long process of conflict and of an assimilation that began with the first Semitic migrations, and lasted two millennia, by which the Ethiopian state and nation was built. The process, as we shall see more clearly in the chapters on the provinces, is by no means finished yet.

We have, however, glanced into a future far beyond the period of this chapter. Here we must record that their continuous medieval wars with the Agaus and the other pagan Hamites did not result in unbroken success for the Ethiopians. In the late tenth century news came to Egypt of a pagan queen who was ravaging Christian country, massacring priests, and burning churches. We can learn little about her but it must have been due to these internal wars that the Ethiopians still further lost their hold upon the coasts. A Muslim dynasty began to dominate the Dahlak islands off Massawa; control over Zeila was lost and a number of Muslim states began to set themselves up over what is now southern Danakil and the northern Somali country.

About the middle of the twelfth century a dynasty, known as the Zagwé, claiming descent from Moses and almost certainly Agau, thrust out the reigning line—which took refuge to the south—and made their lofty principality of Lasta the centre of power. Lying between Tigré and Shoa it is probable that Lasta's period of supremacy began or enhanced the dualism between these two kingdoms, all the more as it is likely that the usurpers never mastered Shoa.

In the attempt to go one better than their rivals, who in all probability by this date already claimed descent from Solomon, the new line put forward Moses as their forefather. The native chronicles give the Zagwé 133 years of power. They do not appear to have represented a cultural revolution, since they were Christian and made use of the Ge'ez language. Their most striking memorial, one in its way as unique as the Aksum architecture, was the group of monolithic churches at Lalibala, the place being named after the enterprising ruler who built them. They are cut away from the solid rock by deep trenches and then hollowed out. The largest, the great Church of the Redeemer of the World, now in a very dilapidated condition, measures 100 by 75 feet and as an additional complication to this incredibly arduous and delicate piece of work, a row of external pillars stands to the full height of the building, while inside are five aisles and twenty-eight pillars. The whole building measures 110 by 78 feet. The tradition is that the king imported 500 workmen from Egypt and Jerusalem to carry out this task.

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[1] Krapf, J. L., *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours in Eastern Africa*, 1860, p. 145.

The astonishing rock-hewn churches of Lalibala have generally been considered as unique and quite exotic, because they were the work of builders imported from abroad. New evidence has, however, lately been collected which suggests that even though the story of this importation is very probably true, the churches are not, as many have thought, out of the line of Ethiopian development. Dr. David Buxton, who since the restoration has been working in remote parts of Ethiopia upon locust investigations, has examined some churches of earlier date than those of Lalibala.[1] He shows that the constructive forms used in these have been copied in solid rock in the Lalibala churches. This shows that the tradition of effective and even artistic building in the same stone and timber technique that was used in the early palaces at Aksum still survived in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Thus even if the masons who made the churches for Lalibala were foreigners, the design was, to a large extent, based upon Ethiopian models. Moreover, it was the king who supplied the considerable initiative and inspiration required to start this great work.

In 1270 a rival to the Zagwé kings, Yekuno Amlak, who claimed to be a true descendant from the line of Solomon, which had found asylum in Shoa, seized the throne. He appears to have been the first Christian ruler over the greater part of Ethiopia, as her boundaries ran before the expansions of the latest age. This change, according to Ethiopian tradition, was brought about by Takla Haimanot, the man who was afterwards regarded by the people, especially in Shoa, as a great saint and patriot. It was he who set up there the famous monastery of Debra Libanos on the side of a great ravine. He is said to have persuaded the last of the usurping rulers of the Zagwé dynasty to resign in favour of the true line, in return for a promise that his dynasty should retain Lasta in something like independence. This promise was kept and the ruler of Wag and Lasta, known as the *Wag-Shum*, retained a very special place among Ethiopian princes, one which the height of his mountains and the rough hardiness of his people no doubt helped him to preserve. The grateful monarch of the restored line is said to have rewarded the saint by promising the church a third of all the realm for the support of the clergy.[1] It is probable that this change of dynasty led to a further extension south from the Tigrean base and the development of Amharic as the spoken language in the new territories. By the end of the middle ages the Amharic power seems to have made contact with the group of Hamitic kingdoms which lay south and south-west of the present capital and to have influenced without incorporating them.

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[1] Buxton, *op. cit.* See also A. A. Monte della Corte's *Lalibela*, Rome, 1940, for some useful material and good photographs.

The period following the Solomonian restoration was one of great literary activity in which the Ethiopians added much to their somewhat meagre literature, most of which had been imported some six centuries before and contained some ecclesiastical disputations quite irrelevant to the Ethiopian situation. Not only were translations now made from Arabic and Coptic works, by which means some interesting texts which would otherwise have been lost have been preserved in Ge'ez, but a few original books of devotion, versions of the lives of saints and chronicles of the kingdom began to be written. The necessarily introvert literature of the Ethiopian writers, whose chief material was the Bible, eastern hagiography and local legends and whose motives were often to exalt the new line of Solomon, produced luxuriant and surprising results. It was at this time that the myth of the descent of the kings from Solomon and the Queen of Sheba was committed to writing in Ethiopia in that characteristic work, *Kebra Nagast*, 'The Glory of the Kings'.

This famous book was probably in its earliest form a sixth-century Coptic collection of a number of legends current in eastern Mediterranean countries. These were later translated in the fourteenth century into Arabic and shortly afterwards into Ge'ez, though the legends of greatest interest to Ethiopia were probably known earlier in that country.[2]

In one of these, the Old Testament story of the Queen of Sheba, which probably referred to an expedition by the Queen of Saba, in Arabia, was appropriated for Ethiopia and worked up into a highly dramatic story to glorify the restored line of kings after the Zagwé usurpation. The legend ran that Makeda, Queen of Ethiopia, visited Solomon who converted her to the Jewish religion, impressed her by his wealth and wisdom, and, having tricked her one night into sharing his bed, sent her back to bear him a son. This son, Menelik I, upon coming of age went to see his father and, by a most unworthy stratagem, stole the ark of the covenant, which he took away to Ethiopia. He was accompanied by the sons of the leading nobles who founded the princely families of the country. When the Jews rejected Christ, the Ethiopian line of kings, heirs of David, inherited the promises, becoming a Christian, and thus a doubly sacred, dynasty. The importance of this myth in the history of Ethiopia and above all in the story of her kings cannot be exaggerated and we shall have to refer to it again.[1]

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[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 1, p. 22, note 2, and p. 24, notes 4, 5, and 6.

[2] Budge, E. A. W., *The Queen of Sheba and Her only Son, Menyelek*, 1922, p. vii ff. Also see Jones and Monroe, pp. 18–21.

In working up these legends the chroniclers were ignorant of the inscriptions which would have given them the clue to the real origins of the country and to their having been ruled by pagan kings as late as the fourth century after Christ. Though they knew of Frumentius, they were not able to give the correct story of the conversion because of their appropriation of the episode of Candace's eunuch and Saint Philip which led them to ante-date the event by some 300 years. Thus the legends do not begin to harmonize at all with true history until they deal with the sixth century.

Even when the chronicles begin to be contemporary, about the fourteenth century, they are of little value as history, being mostly concerned with highly-coloured accounts of the exploits of the kings against their Muslim neighbours, and especially against the kingdom of Adel to the south-east. It is, indeed, the growing danger from the Muslims in the east that fills most of such history as we have of Ethiopia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[2]

The long reigns of 'Amda Tsiyon, for instance (1312–42), and of Zar'a Ya'igob (1434–68) are filled with a series of campaigns against the Muslim kingdoms of Adel, Hadya, and Ifat. This last kingdom was on the very borders of Shoa which was often overrun. There is something monotonous, almost conventional, about the records. Year after year the fortunes of war swing this way and that over the borders; massacres and enslavements, truces and treacheries recur. The high-light is thrown upon the valorous deeds of the Ethiopian kings who put whole armies of Muslims to flight single-handed. We notice how the highlanders hate the campaigns in the lowlands where the heat was so great that it burnt up man and beast and where there was no grass and only stinking water in the wells;[3] whirlwinds would strike the camp and even the king would go down with fever.

We also notice how inconclusive the Ethiopian victories were, since the king, when he had won a battle, nearly always put the defeated ruler's brother in his place, even in neighbouring Ifat. It is clear, too, that the later invasion of Muhammed Grañ, which will be described in its place, was by no means the first, since Muslim armies are reported to have reached right across northern Ethiopia. There was much fighting on the Ethiopian side of the Awash, much burning of churches, and rebellion of provincial rulers in conspiracy with the Muslims. King 'Amda Tsiyon burned alive the governor of a province as far west as Gojjam for treason with the Muslims. Although the Ethiopians at one time for twenty years regained control of Zeila, now the chief port of entry for the Muslims, and in 1445 for a period reached the Webbe Shibeli in the south, it is clear from the records that Ethiopia from the early middle ages lost what degree of sovereignty she may once have exercised over these eastern plains between mountains and coast and was herself hard pressed in her own stronghold. The help received from Asia by the African Muslim states already threw a grave shadow upon the future. In view of the claims put forward in 1945–6 by the government for the restoration of 'lost provinces' in the coast regions of Somalia, these historical facts should be remembered.

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[1] See Appendix A and pp. 69–71

[2] Accounts of this period, based upon the chronicles, are given by Bruce, Coulbeaux, Budge, and, much more briefly, by Jones and Monroe.

[3] Budge, vol. 1, p. 292.

It has been said that Ethiopia was cut off from the world from the time of the Muslim advance of the seventh century to the beginning of the sixteenth. This is true as a rough generalization. There were, of course, occasional contacts in addition to that with Alexandria. Interest was directed to a fictitious letter supposed to have been written by the ruler Prester (Priest) John to the Emperor Manuel Comnenus in 1165. There was another letter which must have been meant for the Negus written by a Pope in 1177 and addressed to 'John, the illustrious and magnificent king of the Indians'. In 1441 another Pope, in contact with Ethiopia through Alexandria, thought he had secured the adherence of the country to the Roman church, a claim which appears to have been unknown in Ethiopia.[1] Ethiopians also went to Jerusalem where they had been given some religious privileges by Saladin.

These were exceptional contacts which proved the rule of isolation. Europe was only dimly aware of the existence of a vaguely conceived region called Ethiopia. We may notice that a work by Bartolomeus Angliens, *De proprietatibus rerum*, which was in use as a natural history reference book as early as the thirteenth century, provides one of the very few medieval references to Ethiopia. It certainly strikes a note which was to last almost, if not quite, until our own day, since Europeans seemed determined to believe that Ethiopia was a country full of strange and terrible things. So we have here, continuing the tradition of the ancient writers, tales of men without heads or of horrible shapes and descriptions of others who 'lyve like beastes without weddynge and dwell with women without lawe'.[1] Other books told how Ethiopians ate the flesh of dragons to cool themselves in summer, or else they gave dreadful pictures of human or animal monsters from this country.

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[1] Jones and Monroe, pp. 52–3, and 57–8.

The idea that there was a Christian ruler who might take in the rear the Muslims who were pressing so hard upon eastern Europe was very exciting. The failure to find him, as traders and explorers pushed into Asia, added to the mystery. Rumours of a Christian kingdom were of especial interest to the Portuguese as they reached out in the fifteenth century further and further round the coast of Africa. In 1427 Prince Henry the Navigator sent an envoy to seek Ethiopia through the Mediterranean. This man actually reached his goal but the Ethiopians, who from the time of Frumentius showed greater readiness to receive visitors from the outside world than to allow them to depart, kept him in their country, where he was found some thirty years later. Twenty-three years after this abortive attempt, Albuquerque sent two representatives in from the Somali coast with the same result. The Ethiopians now themselves sent a messenger, an Armenian called Matthew, who reached Portugal. He carried a letter which was characteristically Ethiopian in tone. The Emperor stated that 'if we were to mobilize our forces they would supply and fill the whole earth. But we have no power on the sea, and you are powerful at sea.' He therefore offered to send provisions for one thousand ships, and supplies 'as great as mountains'.[2]

In 1520 the Portuguese sent their famous embassy which carried the chaplain Father Francisco Alvarez who afterwards recorded the story. We have from two men on the expedition a fuller account than his of the dramatic meeting on the shore at Massawa. Here the Portuguese found the Moors holding the island of Dahlak, while the Christians under the great lord of the northern province, the *Bahr-nagash* (King of the Sea), were on the mainland. Both parties fled as the ships approached. Then some men were seen coming out in a canoe up to the brigantine to ask who had come.' "Christians," was the answer, "vassals of the King of Portugal." Very great was the joy of the two of them and they kissed their feet when they heard this, and kept saying nothing but "Christian, Christian, Jesus Christ, Son of Saint Mary", kissing their garments and begging them to take them to the Captain Major.'[3] It was, indeed, a great moment in Ethiopian history when these long-isolated Christians of Africa met these Christians from another world coming in power to help and comfort them. As Gibbon drily remarks: 'In the first moments of their interview the subjects of Rome and of Alexandria observed the resemblance, rather than the difference, of their faith. . . .'[1] It is sad to reflect how soon the happiness of the meeting was to be lost in sectarian hatred.

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[1] There is a copy of this book in the Bodleian Library.

[2] *The Discovery of Abyssinia by the Portuguese in 1520.* A facsimile reproduction of the *Carta das Novas*, Lisbon, 1521, British Museum, 1938, pp. 91–2. (This brief book came out before Alvarez' account.)

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

Some fifteen Portuguese were detached to go into the interior. Among them was Alvarez, whose description of the country, based upon a six years' visit, is one of the best accounts of Ethiopia ever compiled. He appears to have been a quiet, tactful man, deeply versed in ecclesiastical practice but wholly without narrowness or intolerance. He brought to Ethiopia an open mind and he writes with quiet common sense, neither seeking nor finding any very dramatic contrasts between this remote African kingdom and his own Portugal. He describes the country as it was at the end of the middle ages and as, especially in many of its institutions, it remained with very little change almost until our own day. He thus occupies an intermediate position of great value to the historian who wishes to look either backwards into the medieval period or forwards into the coming centuries. It is this which makes his book so useful, especially for those studying the origin and character of Ethiopian institutions. This use of Alvarez must not, however, be anticipated in this section which must be confined to an outline of political events.

Alvarez reveals Ethiopia to us as it was, on the very eve of the most destructive of the Muslim invasions, and probably at the highest point of civilization and prosperity that it has reached since the decline from the impressive if narrowly-based achievement of Aksum; it was certainly the highest point relatively to contemporary standards of European civilization.

The embassy went over the mountains through the country of the *Bahr-nagash*, which appears to have been more fully populated then than it is now, and into Tigré. Everywhere in this northern region they saw churches and multitudes of priests and monks; they passed through 'well-tilled fields of wheat, barley and millet, pulse, lentils, and all other sorts of vegetables', and 'with tillage and fallow as in Portugal, there were fine herds of cattle, horses, mules and fowls'. The travellers admired the antiquities of Aksum: they passed on through the lordships of nobles, princes and princesses, of the church and of the Emperor himself; they saw one of the great feasts of raw meat on plates of bread, and, finally reaching Shoa through Angot, they approached the Emperor (whom they call the Prester, though he was not, of course, a priest) in his vast, moving capital of tents. There are magnificent descriptions of this, with its central portion curtained off for the king. Within this, or nearby, were tents for the Queen; for the treasury; for two churches; for the royal wardrobe; for the court of justice; for the prison; for the pages and the kitchens. Every great lord and the Abuna had his own group of tents, each like a small town. There was a market place in which the Moors handled all the trade except that in food. The king was surrounded with all the splendour and luxury possible under such conditions and served by hundreds of courtiers, dressed in beautiful muslins and silks from the east. Even the horses wore diadems and plumes, and four lions bound in great gold chains were paraded.[1] The envoys were treated to 'an infinite quantity of bread and wine and many dainties of meat of various kinds and very well arranged and a calf whole in bread, that is to say, in a pie, so well dressed that we could not get tired of it'.[2]

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[1] Gibbon, *op. cit.* vol. 5, p. 165.

Their welcome was not, however, one of undiluted cordiality. The king frequently put off seeing them and pestered them for presents like any petty African chief. Once, however, the meeting had taken place, Lebna Dengel and his courtiers showed their dominant interest in ecclesiastical matters in prolonged talks with Alvarez, during which they questioned him closely and eagerly about the history, doctrine and ritual of his church. The Emperor gave him a church-tent of brocade and Mecca velvet, and himself attended matins and mass in it and approved highly the Frankish forms of service.

Alvarez did not penetrate into the west of the country; from Amhara he went south into Shoa. From his description we learn that during the medieval centuries the Ethiopian kingdom had been greatly extended southwards and had assimilated the Hamitic speaking peoples of what is now central Ethiopia. The great provinces of Tigré, Amhara, Gojjam, and Shoa had, of course, taken shape long before. In the south were the Hamitic border kingdoms of Enarea, Guragé, and Kaffa, all independent of the Emperor. At the same time the Muslim peril was growing on the east, and it was upon their mutual fear of this threat that Portugal hoped to find common ground with this Christian nation which held a citadel right upon the Muslim frontiers. The Emperor's lordship went no further north than Massawa and even the immediate hinterland here was largely Muslim. The Danakil were independent. The kingdoms of Fatigar and Adel, of which the latter was much the more important and dangerous, lay close to Ethiopia on the east, while in the north-west the last remnants of Nubian Christianity were disap-

[1] Alvarez, pp. 160–8.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

pearing under the advancing Muslims who, in this period, established the kingdom of Sennar near the fringes of Ethiopia on the middle reaches of the Blue Nile. The Ethiopians had little to fear from the pagan blacks on the western side or from the old Hamitic kingdoms still surviving in the south.

Even while the Portuguese mission was there, fighting broke out with Adel. Yet relations with the Muslims were not those of unbroken hostility; not only were the Ethiopians dependent upon the Moorish merchants for the products of the east but we hear that Lebna Dengel would have married a Moorish princess if, recoiling at the last minute with more success than Henry VIII in the case of the 'Flanders mare', he had not objected to her two very long front teeth. He received her sister, the Queen of Adel, with her fifty honourable Moors, with great honour when she came to ask his help against her brother-in-law.[1]

After six years the Portuguese envoys at last took their leave, extricating themselves with difficulty from the tenacious hospitality of the Ethiopians. The Emperor, in a letter to the king of Portugal, paid a tribute to Alvarez, whom, with perfect accuracy, he called 'a just man and very truthful in speech'. The Portuguese reached home safely and Alvarez wrote the book which, published in 1540, at last dispelled Europe's ignorance about Ethiopia.

The Muslim enemy had, however, realized the danger which this mission represented. The Ottoman Turks were on the move and new vigour and fanaticism were running through the Muslim world. It was essential to them that their Portuguese enemies should not link up with this Christian outpost in Africa. They set to work to cut off such contacts as Ethiopia still had with the sea. By agreement with Cairo it had been possible to send regular pilgrimages to Jerusalem, but soon after the Portuguese mission arrived in Ethiopia a large party of pilgrims was massacred by the Muslims in north-eastern Tigré. This was a grim warning. In 1527, soon after the Portuguese left Ethiopia, the armies of Adel attacked. They had two great advantages. They were under the command of a very able leader, Muhammed Grañ (the left-handed), the governor of Zeila, who had entered into an alliance with the Turks. Secondly, they possessed firearms, new and terrifying weapons in those parts. These were carried by trained Turkish soldiers, and the army was also reinforced from Arabia. The result was the most dreadful disaster Ethiopia had ever suffered. The Muslims gained an easy victory and proceeded to reduce and ravage the whole country. It is impossible to estimate how much of its civilization, represented in the stone buildings, churches and monasteries and all the other accumulated treasures of the middle ages, including the manuscripts, was destroyed. The king became a fugitive in the mountains and it is said that the majority of the people accepted the faith as well as the yoke of the Muslims.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 323.

We are fortunate in having a contemporary account of this war from the Muslim side. The writer was the historian at Grañ's court who put together his record from the stories of the soldiers and finished the book before 1543. His history is distorted by what we should now call propaganda: he exalts the austerity and unworldliness of Grañ, 'the shining meteor of the faith'.[1] He shows the most pitiless ferocity towards the Christians and in almost the same breath in which he asks for mercy from God, 'the most merciful of old', he describes the massacre of the idolators and adds, 'May God have no pity upon them!' He gives an astonishing account of the riches of Ethiopia and especially of its churches with their golden vases, their stocks of silk and their plaques of gold studded with pearls. He describes, for example, a church founded by one of the earlier kings with 'vases of gold and silver; there was also a great book of which the pages as well as the binding were of gold: this book contained their gospel, and two strong men were needed to carry it. Xamsuh (Grañ) entered the church, burned it and carried off all the treasures which were found there: among others he found there a burnous of King Iskander; the border of this burnous contained 50 oz. of gold (in the embroidery) . . . the Iman (Grañ) and all the Moslems admired the golden books and pictures (images) of the Christians.'[2]

On another occasion he describes how the Muslims came to the church of a Tigrean monastery. 'It was a large church decorated with all kinds of ornaments and the monks were found assembled in this church. The Iman had them all killed in the interior of the church itself; the blood ran out at the door. There were 500 monks there.'[3] This history shows what a large part the Somali tribes played in this war and how bitterly they suffered in the cold rain-swept heights of northern Ethiopia. It also claims that the defeated Ethiopians relapsed into mass conversion to Islam. The Ethiopian Emperor himself told the returning Portuguese, 'All my chiefs have rebelled against me to help the Moors.'[4]

The Portuguese had been tardy in giving help to Ethiopia but their great impulse of imperial energy had not yet passed and they acted vigorously. Penetrating the screen of sea-power the Turks had thrown over the Red Sea, the son of Vasco da Gama, Christopher, landed at Massawa in 1541, with four hundred men with matchlocks. Grañ, however, borrowed 900 Turks from those holding Arabia and destroyed the bulk of the European force and killed da Gama. It was now that the Portuguese showed their true metal. The remnants of the force, in co-operation with Lebna Dengel's son, Galaudeiros, built up a new army in the mountains, equipped with firearms which had been held in reserve and using gunpowder which one of them succeeded in making from local materials. In a surprise attack in 1543 on Grañ's camp they killed this formidable enemy and gained a complete victory.

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[1] Chahab ad-Din Ahmad, *Futuh el-Habacha* (translated by A. d'Abbadie and P. Paulitshke), Paris, 1898, p. 6.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

[4] Castanhoso, M. de, *The Portuguese Expedition to Abyssinia, 1541–3* (translated by R. S. Whiteway), Hakluyt Society, 1892, p. 107.

This meant the end of the direct threat by the Muslim armies from Adel. The Muslim tide ebbed back as quickly as it had come. This was fortunate indeed, as the Turks now dominated the whole coast line and had completely seized Massawa, thus cutting Ethiopia off from further external aid. The new king Galaudeiros set to work to build up the royal power and restore the ravaged country and its church. He had some success but the attacks from Adel had opened the way to another enemy, of whom we shall hear much. East and south of Shoa a number of pastoral, Hamitic tribes, pagan except where they were beginning to come under Muslim influence, had collected after migrating, it seems, from Arabia and the Somali coast. Though they had no unity they were known collectively as the Gallas, or Oromo.

There will be much to say of the Gallas in the main chapters of this book. Here we must refer only to their first impacts upon Ethiopia. They emerge first in the chronicles of the fourteenth century, and may have been infiltrating gradually into Shoa and across its south-east borders between this century and the sixteenth. They now flooded into the breaches made by Grañ's armies, and their pressure became something much more serious than infiltration and demanded a long series of campaigns by the Ethiopians.[1]

The Ethiopians had now to face a very different kind of threat to their unity. News of their kingdom and, above all, of its isolated and heretical church was of the deepest interest to the Roman Catholics, now in the full vigour of the counter-reformation which permitted no friendly tolerance such as that shown by Alvarez and his companions. It was almost inevitable that the missionary vitality of the Jesuits, already concerned with India, should find an opening in this interesting country on their route. We have most of the story from the missionaries themselves and with it a great deal of valuable information about the country. Most of this shows how reliable Alvarez' account had been and with what constancy, in spite of all the events and influences that had come to it, Ethiopia had maintained its traditions and institutions.[1] The theme of the attempted conversion of Ethiopia to Roman Catholicism is, of course, given from the point of view of the missionaries, and since it left little behind it but dislike and suspicion towards their church, it may be very quickly summarized.

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[1] For a very brief summary of the origins and history of the Gallas, based upon the leading authorities, see Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 576.

The attempt began, as far as serious evangelization is concerned, in the reign of Galaudeiros (1540–59), when Andrea de Oviedo and several priests arrived in the country in 1557. Their teaching had no effect upon the vigorous and theologically effective Galaudeiros, or upon his brother Minas (1559–63), who tried to stamp out the beginnings of the Roman faith which the Portuguese soldiers had, in limited and scattered fashion, begun to introduce. Minas's son, Sarsa Dengel (1563–96), was, however, more tolerant, even though, in a reign of constant wars with the Gallas and with Adel, he gave no credence himself to the new faith. Oviedo was succeeded by another Jesuit, Paez, who, after he had, with wonderful patience and diplomacy, worked his way in through the Muslim barrier, set himself with great skill to earn the respect of the Ethiopians as a schoolmaster, an expert in both their languages and a craftsman. Working himself as a designer and master-mason, he built for the Emperor a two-storied palace near Lake Tana much to the astonishment of the Ethiopians who, having no name for such a phenomenon, called it 'a house upon a house'. He succeeded in converting the Emperor Za Dengel, but this ruler's efforts to extend the religion by the use of his royal power stirred the chiefs and the church to a rebellion in which he was killed.

His successor Susenyos (1607–32) was also converted by Paez and, after first attending to wars with the Agaus and Gallas, he proclaimed his conversion. Unfortunately for the Jesuits, Paez upon his death was succeeded by the intemperate and rigid Mendez, who found his way in across the land of the Danakil. There followed some wretched years of reiterated rebellions against the king and this at the very moment when the Galla menace demanded unity. At last, wearied by the misery of his kingdom and impressed by the tenacity with which his people fought for their national church, Susenyos abandoned his policy and abdicated.

He was succeeded by his son Fasilidas (1632–67) who decreed the suppression of Roman Catholicism and the banishment of the Jesuits. Some of these, led by Mendez himself, took refuge with the *Bahr-*

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[1] See especially the accounts collected by Tellez.

nagash who, in the tradition of his office, was in revolt against the Emperor. He was coerced, however, into giving them up. He sold them to the Muslim governor of Suakim from whom they were ransomed by the Spanish Government. Those who were still hiding with Ethiopian converts were hunted out and executed with their hosts.

Rome could not at first accept defeat and several attempts were made to send new missionaries to this obstinate people. They were killed by the Muslims who guarded all the approaches and who were even encouraged by Fasilidas to act in this way. In the reign of his son two small parties of friars did manage to reach the country but, as soon as they were detected, they were stoned to death. The Ethiopians, inaccessible, conservative and tenacious in their ancient faith, thus defeated the revived and militant Roman church in its attempts which lasted for more than a century, and which enriched the roll of martyrs.

Fasilidas was a firm ruler. He waged constant war against the Gallas in the attempt to stem the tide of their advance. He restored the great church at Aksum which the Muslims had partially destroyed, and he used Gondar in Bagemdir as his capital. His son John maintained the prohibition against the entry of Europeans and was mainly taken up with disputes with the native theologians 'whose languid faith', according to Gibbon, had been 'inflamed by the exercise of dispute' with the Roman Catholics.[1] The reign of his son Yasus (1682–1706) was marked by two abortive attempts by Louis XIV to open up relations with Ethiopia. Yasus was an able administrator and reformer, and stands out all the more because he was the last strong king before a prolonged period of confusion and decline.

We might pause upon the brink of this gloomy period to look away from Ethiopia for a moment and consider what measure of knowledge about the country was by this time available in Europe. We have seen that in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries important books about Ethiopia were written, by Alvarez (1540), Tellez (1660), and Lobo (1667). The first attempt to write a real history of the country was made by the German, Ludolphus. A most serious student, he mastered the language of which he issued a grammar; engaged what we should now call a research assistant, and wrote a history based upon all the information he could find amongst the Portuguese and Jesuit writers. He made use also of an Ethiopian Roman Catholic, Gregory, whom he invited to Saxony so that they could work together. Ludolphus, whose history was first published in 1681, describes in the preface how angered Gregory was at the false tales and lies that he found current in Europe about Ethiopia. Ludolphus has been called the founder of Ethiopian studies and his book remained the chief authority for 200 years after its publication. Though a truly scholarly historian, his pages are warmed by a great sympathy for his subject.[1]

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[1] Gibbon, *op. cit.*, vol. 5, p. 166.

There was since the appearance of these and other books on the subject, less excuse for ignorance of Ethiopia even outside Spain and Portugal and the ecclesiastical circles in Rome in touch with Ethiopian affairs. The learned could now recognize under the name Chaldaic, which was sometimes erroneously applied to Ge'ez, a language hitherto unknown to the civilized world. In Rome by the middle of the sixteenth century there was actually a special college and chapel for Ethiopians where the Pope wisely allowed them considerable latitude in their form of Mass. In the Bodleian collection there is a Latin translation of the Ethiopian mode of baptism, published as early as 1548. There is also a beautifully written manuscript, of the size of a pocket book, containing a collection of rhapsodies in honour of the Virgin, one for each day of the week, which was possessed by Archbishop Laud; while in 1660 Sir Edmund Castell when putting together a collection of songs in honour of the accession of Charles II, succeeded in including one in Ge'ez with a Latin translation.[2]

It is one of the weaknesses of Ethiopian history, to which, in the late seventeenth century, we now return, that we have to rely upon so few witnesses that the subjective element becomes all-important. Even, however, when allowance is made for the sometimes biased views of the missionary fathers, it appears that Ethiopia had fallen from its height of prosperity and order as described by Alvarez. The seventeen years of devastation by Grañ, the confusion and bitterness of the religious rebellion and civil wars and the ceaseless pressure and penetration of the Galla tribes had all contributed to this decline. The remarkable fact is that the deterioration was not more complete; the faith and institutions of the country still maintained their former shape, and able rulers arose from time to time who could call upon the loyalty of the people to the line of Solomon, maintain a fair degree of order and wage effective war. It was, indeed, upon the monarchy that the fortune of the country depended, and it is not surprising that the century and a half of eclipse into which Ethiopia now passes coincided with the failure of the monarchy. It was also a time, it is interesting to note, when the royal capital was no longer mobile but was fixed at Gondar.

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[1] This book, which is illustrated, was first published in Latin at Frankfort-on-Main in 1681. In 1684 an English translation appeared by J. P. Ghent, entitled *A New History of Ethiopia*. This is a very fine production and contains eight illustrations and a most valuable map. References in the text are to this edition.

[2] Copies of these two books are in the Bodleian Library. Castell (1600–85) was a student of Semitic languages and Professor of Arabic at Cambridge. He addressed his verses to the king in order to draw attention to his poverty as he had incurred a large debt in producing his Lexicon.

This barren and squalid period of Ethiopian history can be summarized very shortly here. The eighteenth century saw Yasus the Great succeeded by his son Takla Haimanot, who was very shortly murdered by conspirators. After another brief reign of his uncle in 1709 the line of Solomon was deposed and the lord of Tigré was set up as Emperor. This interregnum lasted only five years, at the end of which, such was the strength of Ethiopian royalty, the line of Solomon was restored in the person of Dawit, called the Inexorable. He showed this character by massacring the monks of the famous Shoan monastery of Debra Libanos because they disagreed with him upon a theological point of great refinement. After five years, in 1729, he died, leaving behind an infant son Yasus II (1729–53) who, after a long minority, grew up to be a weak and vain young man, wholly unable to control a kingdom that was rapidly going to pieces before the rivalries of the nobles and turbulence of the Gallas, large numbers of whom were now strongly established inside as well as just outside the frontiers. In 1753 Yasus II was succeeded by his young son Yoas. The Gallas now seized their chance. Dawit had raised a Galla to be his chief minister and governor of Damot, and this man's son Fasil seized the succession to this office by force and his Galla army became a power to be reckoned with. Meanwhile, Yoas's mother was a Galla and she brought all her relations into high office. The Ethiopian nobility raged at the elevation of people whom they regarded as semi-barbarians. Mikael, the able and ruthless governor of Tigré, put himself at their head, murdered Yoas and set up another Solomonian puppet whom he discarded in turn and poisoned after a brief tenure, replacing him by his son Takla Haimanot II.

Most of these characters come to vivid and dramatic life in the pages of James Bruce, the Scottish explorer who arrived at this time, 1769, in Gondar. It is disappointing that such a full and able narrator should have been given such a sorry story to tell. For the whole of the two years that he spent in the country as a courtier and, indeed, an official of the friendly young monarch and his terrible master, Ras Mikael, he can describe little besides wars, conspiracies, treacheries and bloody reprisals: men were massacred, tortured, chopped to pieces, flayed alive. The picture is relieved only by his admiration for individual Ethiopians and his friendships with them. At last, sickened as he says with the perpetual bloodshed—'I at last scarce ever went out, and nothing occupied my thoughts but how to escape from this bloody country'—he at length succeeded in leaving and returned safely to Scotland. He wrote, years later, those enthralling volumes which are almost our only external evidence for the eighteenth century and he brought back a most precious collection of Ethiopian chronicles and other documents. His record, even though it deals with a period of decadence, provides us with much valuable evidence about Ethiopian institutions.

Bruce maintains that the Shoan princes deliberately admitted the Galla flood into Wallaga so as to increase their independence by cutting themselves off in this way from the control of decadent Gondar. Yet—a striking tribute to their loyalty to the reigning branch of the royal dynasty to which they also claimed to belong—they did not attempt to break away from their allegiance and sent troops to Gondar when required.[1] The Emperor on his side always showed 'great tenderness and distinction' to the people of Shoa, since from this kingdom his own dynasty, protected from the Zagwé usurpers, had been restored by the efforts of the great Shoan and national saint, Takla Haimanot.[2]

The period that follows is, if anything, even more dismal and confused than the preceding years. The country did, indeed, fall to pieces. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there appeared at one time to be no less than six men claiming to be Emperor. The great provinces became practically independent. The Gallas had now come between Shoa and the other provinces, and the ambitious dynasty of Shoa, which claimed Solomonian descent, had built up there a position of *de facto* independence. In the north emperors were made and unmade, the imperial rulers now being puppet kings in the hands of the lords of the great provinces. By the middle of the nineteenth century the main contestants were Ras Ali of Gondar, a mayor of the palace of Galla blood, the Ras of Tigré, and the ruler of Shoa. It was at this moment that an adventurer who had built up for himself a private army by successful brigandage along the north-western frontier suddenly emerged. Ras Ali, having failed to put him down, temporized, giving him his daughter in marriage. After Ras Ali's death this man, Kassa, in 1855 coerced the Abuna into crowning him Emperor under the name of Tewodros, which may be translated here into its European form of Theodore by which he is well known. The character of the man and still more the renewed contacts with the outer world which now took place make the beginning of his reign a proper point at which to begin the modern history of Ethiopia.

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[1] Bruce, J., *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, 1768–1773*, 5 vols., Edinburgh, 1790.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 256.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS

The Emperor Theodore reigned from 1855 to 1868. He was a man of very abnormal character, one whose great wits were certainly nearly allied to a madness which grew upon him in his later years. We are fortunate in that we have a very intimate account of the man and his country in the earlier years of his reign from the English consul, Walter Plowden. This energetic and intelligent young man persuaded Lord Palmerston to send him out to conclude a somewhat meaningless trade treaty with Ras Ali in 1849, thus following upon the footsteps of Cornwallis Harris who opened the first formal diplomatic contacts between Britain and Ethiopia. He stayed on in the country as consul with his friend Bell and both became close personal friends of the new Emperor, for whom, indeed, Bell, according to a French observer, had almost a kind of worship.[1] Plowden was eventually murdered by some mutinous soldiers on his way back to England in 1860 during one of the recurrent Tigré rebellions. When Theodore and Bell marched together to avenge him, the Englishman, who held the honourable office of *liqamakwas* in which he dressed like the Emperor in battle, was killed. Theodore avenged Plowden by a wholesale massacre of the people in the region where he was murdered. He informed the British Government, by way of propitiation for its loss, that he had put 15,000 people to death.

Theodore's reign was one of perpetual war. He first deposed the last, feeble, titular ruler of the royal dynasty. He fought successfully against Tigré and conquered Shoa, taking the boy Menelik, who represented the Shoan dynasty there, to live at his court. He waged constant war against the Gallas. His experiences in Kwara on the borders of Muslim country had given him a great hatred of that religion and he was also fiercely intolerant of Roman Catholicism. He had the intelligence and liberalism to recognize the drastic reforms needed for the regeneration of his country and, influenced no doubt by his English friends, he proclaimed a series of striking innovations. Plowden describes attempts to reconstitute the whole system of administration by turning the chiefs into salaried officials dependent upon the imperial power. There were other proclamations: to abolish the slave trade; to initiate a paid army; to limit tolls; to enforce Christian monogamy; to suppress the custom of vendetta, and to regulate the power and lands of the church. This programme has a very modern sound; but almost the whole of it still remained to be done at the accession of the present Emperor and some of it still has to be achieved. It is impossible to believe that any of it was firmly and consistently put through by Theodore if we are to judge by the constant warfare and oppression of his reign and the condition to which the country was reduced by the end.

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[1] Vice-Consul Le Jean, quoted by Hotten, J. C., *Abyssinia and its People*, 1868, p. 101.

The Emperor's character was, indeed, marked by the most violent contradictions. It has been said that such contradictions are characteristically Ethiopian and that he was exceptional only in his opportunities and the intimate European reports upon his life and conduct. He was portrayed as a model of politeness even towards the meanest peasant yet he was the victim of ungovernable rages. His humanity was such, it is recorded, that he would himself buy slaves from the Muslim traders in order to emancipate and Christianize them, yet he revelled in cruelties that were notorious even in that land of harsh punishments, burning deserting soldiers alive by the score, throwing prisoners from precipices and keeping large numbers of others round him, chained in wretchedness and semi-starvation. He was deeply religious and yet he quarrelled with his Abuna and reviled him.[1]

He owed his final destruction to the British whom he had so much admired. During his reign for the first time a considerable number of Europeans had found their way into his country; German and English missionaries, German artisans and zoologists, a French painter and a number of adventurers. The negligence of the British Foreign Office in forgetting for two years to answer a communication to Queen Victoria from Theodore, who by 1864 was developing megalomania, led him to throw the consul, Cameron, and the other British into prison. The British Government then sent a Mr. Rassam to protest: this agent with sixty other Europeans were seized and loaded with chains. They were held at Magdala, to which grim natural fortress, overlooking Wallo and the turbulent Gallas, the Emperor had moved his headquarters. The whole episode is described by Rassam in his book in which the

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[1] Plowden, W., *Travels in Abyssinia*, 1868, pp. 456–9.

Emperor is shown continually striking attitudes and courting sympathy and admiration even from his victims.[1]

The British Government decided that it was inconsistent with honour and humanity to leave these prisoners, who included two of their official representatives, to perish in captivity. The first European attack upon Ethiopia was, therefore, made in 1867. A military expedition into an almost unknown, roadless country of lofty mountains, deep gorges and heavy rains was a serious business and the British under Sir Robert Napier took it seriously. Landing near Massawa and using an impressive assortment of transport animals including elephants, bullocks, and camels, the troops advanced at an average speed of little more than a mile a day to Magdala. The Emperor began by regarding the expedition with contempt. 'Oh! that we may meet those white donkeys,' he cried to his chiefs. 'We shall show them what the sword and lance of Ethiopia can do.' Bravely defended, indeed, the natural fortress might have proved almost impregnable to assault. But the licence which the Emperor had allowed his discontented troops in pillaging the provinces they traversed led to this well-behaved foreign army being welcomed as liberators. The local Gallas, especially, had seen their leaders mutilated and flung from the rocky crests of Magdala and were ardent auxiliaries. Though Theodore's troops attacked rifles and artillery with frantic courage, the victory was quickly won. Of the 3,400 British troops who took part in the assault, not one was lost. The Emperor, as soon as he saw that defeat was certain, shot himself, though suicide is a rare and grave crime among Ethiopians. In spite of this he was buried in Magdala church. His queen was treated with every care.

The British Government and people were still in that phase of policy when they were not interested in annexation or spheres of influence in Africa; their general, having failed to distinguish a ready successor to Theodore, simply freed the prisoners and marched away, leaving Ethiopia to relapse from the crazy tyranny of Theodore to the four years' anarchy of a disputed succession.[2] Although the last decadent descendant of the line of Solomon was found still living among the prisoners, it was not he but the chief of Tembien who fought his way to power after four years of civil war. Thanks partly to the cannons and rifles with which the British Army had rewarded him for his friendly reception of them, he had been able to seize the chief power in Tigré. He now secured his coronation as John IV at Aksum at the hands of a new Abuna he had obtained from Egypt. His reign lasted from 1872 to 1889. As a Tigrean his enthronement greatly stimulated the pride of the northern province, and left it very unready to accept the Shoan rule that was to follow.

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[1] See also *Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia 1846–68*, presented to the House of Commons in 1868. This long report of over 700 pages gives much information not only about the imprisonment of the captives but about Theodore and Ethiopia generally.

[2] For the official account see Holland, T. J., and Hozier, H. M., *Record of the Expedition to Abyssinia*, with maps and plans, 2 vols, 1870. For list of other authorities see Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 1, p. 118, note 4 and bibliography.

The evidence upon John's character is not so full or so intimate as that about his predecessor and his successor. He has been called a mystic and a theologian and his people named him, in view of his austerity, 'the monk and soldier'.[1] All agree upon his great courage and militancy. It was his reputation as a warrior and athlete which made it possible for him to establish his supremacy. But, though anxious to be just, he was not the man to take advice.[2] He was as fanatical as Theodore both in his hatred of Muslims whom he persecuted cruelly and in his aversion from Roman Catholics. Events put him in peril from peoples of both these faiths and gave full opportunity for his martial vigour. The world which had broken in upon Ethiopian seclusion in Theodore's reign became increasingly insistent in John's. The Suez Canal had been opened a year after the battle of Magdala; this made the Red Sea one of the world's great highways, and its barren coasts at once assumed strategic and economic importance. In the interior the sources of the Nile began to arouse European interest and ambitions. Great stretches of territory waiting for annexation by the first comer lay along both the sea and the river and Ethiopia stood between them.

The first to attack was Egypt, galvanized into a sudden and ephemeral renewal of that imperialism which had gained her the Sudan fifty years before. In the very year of John's accession, the ambitious Khedive Ismail took over from his feeble suzerain, Turkey, all her Red Sea coasts and extended Egyptian rule over the mysterious inland Muslim outpost of Harar. Three years later an Egyptian army attacked from the north, but John defeated it and repeated his victory against a second attack in the following year.

A few years later, in 1883, the whole extensive but rotten fabric of the Egyptian empire collapsed with the rough shaking given to it by the Mahdi. The British, having just before taken over the control of Egypt, decided to cut the losses of their new protégé and gave the advice, which could not be refused, that the Egyptian empire should be abandoned.

[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 1, p. 151, note 3.

[2] Wellby, M.S., *'Twixt Sirdar and Menelik*, 1901, pp. 88–9.

In April 1884 Admiral Hewitt was sent to negotiate with the Emperor a treaty by which, in return for helping to evacuate the garrisons of Kassala and Amidaib, the British agreed to his occupying the Bogos country in the Keren region, to which he laid claim, with the right to use Massawa as a port.[1]

This concession aroused the bitter resentment of General Gordon who, in the doomed city of Khartoum, was supposed to be arranging for the evacuation of the Sudan. 'What an action', he commented in his famous journal on the 21st of October 1884. 'These lands (except Bogos) are entirely Mussulman, have held their own and are in no way threatened and *we* go and send a wild, *so-called* Christian people (who have nothing to do with the quarrel) against these peoples, who have held their own against the Mahdi. The only place the king could possibly occupy is Senheit (Keren). He will drive out the Roman Catholic mission at once (part of his missionary movement); the occupation of Senheit just cuts off the safe road from Massawa to Kassala.'[2] Again on the following day he exclaims, 'King John and the Mahdi both force men to change their religion; both cut off the lips of smokers and noses of *snuffers*; both are fanatics and robbers.'[3] Little more than three months later Gordon fell before the Mahdist spears.

In the event the Emperor, who had his own good reasons for fighting the Mahdists, did help most effectively with the evacuation to Massawa of the garrisons of Gallabat and Amidaib early in 1885.[4]

The Emperor's hopes, which the British had clearly encouraged, of being the heir of the collapsing Egyptian empire in neighbouring Muslim territories were to be disappointed. The territories abandoned by Egypt were not to remain a vacuum which the Ethiopians could fill. The Suez canal had bought Ethiopia new neighbours. A threat politically and strategically greater than that of the Mahdists appeared. In 1882 the Italian Government took over a trading post at Assab on the Red Sea coast which had been opened by a private Italian company, and in 1885 Italian troops landed at Massawa and at once began to move inland. The British viewed this advance with complaisance. There can be no doubt that the British action in transferring their support from Ethiopia to Italy was against the letter, certainly against the spirit, of the Hewitt treaty, though this by no means handed the whole of the modern Eritrea to Ethiopia. It should also be remembered that it was not from Ethiopia but from the collapsing Egyptian empire that the Italians took Massawa and that the Egyptians had themselves taken it over from the Turks. It is true that the region round Keren was obtained only about 1872 for the Egyptians by Munzinger but it was then not only the frontier district of Ethiopia, but one which welcomed the change of government. It had good reason. 'The Abyssinian armies', we learn, 'regularly ravage and slay their weaker brethren who are consequently beginning to hate the name of Christianity which they see only accompanied by fire and sword.'[1]

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[1] Wingate, F. R., *Mahdiism and the Egyptian Sudan*, 1891, p. 150.

[2] *The Journals of Major-General G. C. Gordon at Khartoum*, edited by A. Egmont Hake, pp. 214 and 219. The writer is indebted to Archbishop David Mathew, who kindly allowed her to see his unpublished book on Ethiopia, for drawing attention to these remarks of Gordon.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 217.

[4] Wingate, *op. cit.*, p. 244. See also Lord Cromer's account in *Modern Egypt*, vol. 2, pp. 47 ff. Also Hertslet, E., *The Map of Africa by Treaty*, 1909, vol. 2, p. 422.

The reason if not the justification for the British attitude is to be found in the position of Great Britain in international affairs. She had at this time a paternal and friendly attitude to the newly united Italy while she was regarding the expansion of Germany with great watchfulness and was deeply disturbed by the world-wide colonial rivalry of France, the most probable entrant into the Egyptian vacuum. It was difficult for her at that period to regard seriously Ethiopia's claim to take over important strategic territory and new administrative responsibility. It would hardly be true to say, however, that she did nothing to try to check the threatened conflict between Ethiopia and Italy. The private papers of Lord Lugard, which have lately come into the charge of the writer, show that when he went up to Saati in 1887 to find the Italians advancing inland from Massawa he recorded that they were furious at the intervention of the Portal mission, which had just been sent to Ethiopia and which had held up their military operations.[2] It is an interesting illustration of the ideas of the time that young Lugard, idealistic and ardent in the struggle against slavery, should have offered his military services to the Italians. The offer was not, we may note, accepted.

To meet the Italian threat John needed behind him the strength of a united nation. This leads us to consider the position of his chief rival, Menelik of Shoa. Menelik had escaped from Theodore before the end of that Emperor's reign and had begun to strengthen and extend the power of Shoa. He had the self-confidence and the prestige that came from the claim of his house which was generally accepted in the country as belonging to the line of Solomon. But he was a young man who could wait as well as act and he made no bid for power after the battle of Magdala. He carried on the tradition of his fathers by conquering stretch after stretch of Galla territory to the south and west of Shoa. We shall have to consider these conquests in more detail later.[1] Their main interest here is that they enabled him to build up a tried army of soldiers devoted to a ruler who gave them their fill of plunder and land, and also that they led him to make a private treaty with the Italians about the maintenance of communications with Assab through which he hoped to obtain the European weapons essential to his plans.

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[1] *Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846–68*, p. 665.

[2] There is some reference to this in Lugard, F., *The Rise of our East African Empire*, 1893, vol. 1, pp. 6–10.

Menelik was not likely to be a good subject to the self-made Emperor John. Indeed, John's embarrassment relieved him for the most part from having to behave as a subject. In 1878 John found himself obliged to make terms by which Menelik was recognized as his successor and was crowned hereditary king of Wallo and Shoa. A few years later, Menelik's infant daughter, Zawditu, was betrothed to John's son who died shortly after the subsequent marriage. All this time Menelik pursued his own wars against the Gallas, Kaffa, and Harar on the edge of his kingdom and against his fellow-king of Gojjam. John could expect no help from him against the Italians as they pushed inland from Massawa; Menelik, on the contrary, kept in close touch with his Emperor's enemies. In 1887, however, an Italian column was completely destroyed by the Ethiopian forces. John called upon Menelik to aid him. At this critical moment the Sudanese forces of the new Mahdist *jihad* reached the frontier of the Christian kingdom and an army of 60,000 swept into Gojjam, defeating its king Takla Haimanot and sacking Gondar. Menelik moved up in leisurely fashion but did no fighting, and in 1888 was back in Shoa where he struck a new bargain with the Italians by which he was promised 10,000 rifles.

John now attacked the unfortunate king of Gojjam, and again called upon Menelik to join him. The Shoan army was mobilized but turned its attention *en route* to securing Menelik's hold over Wallo with its difficult Galla population. Early the next year, 1889, the Mahdists attacked again, and John, unsupported by Menelik, led his army against them to what would have been a victory if he had not fallen himself, with the result that his army at once beat a retreat. The events of these years show how far, late in the nineteenth century, Ethiopia was from national unity. At a moment when the country was so gravely threatened from two sides, the leading rulers could indulge in civil war and serve their territorial interests before those of Ethiopia as a whole.[2]

Menelik, who was to reign from 1889 to 1913, succeeded John without difficulty though he had some trouble, easily suppressed, from Mangasha, John's illegitimate son in Tigré, of whom, with others of his family, more will be heard. One of Menelik's first acts was to negotiate with the Italians the Treaty of Uchali, which the Italians later tried to interpret as giving them complete control over Ethiopia's foreign relations. To follow up the treaty Menelik sent Ras Makonnen, his able cousin, to Italy where he obtained from the king a lavish gift of rifles and artillery. Meanwhile the Italians consolidated their position in Eritrea and by 1890 were well-established on the mountains at Asmara, while at the same time they were infiltrating into southern Somaliland. In 1893 the wary Menelik repaid a loan they had made him in the Treaty of Uchali and refused any longer to recognize this agreement. He claimed that the Amharic version which he had signed said that he *might*, not that he *must*, carry on his foreign relations with Italian advice.

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[1] See below, pp. 293–5.

It was clear that Italian ambitions must clash with those of the new Emperor. In the very years in which Britain, accepting the Italian interpretation of the Treaty of Uchali, signed a treaty with Italy recognizing Ethiopia as being within the latter's sphere of influence, Menelik drew up a letter to the European powers defining his conception of the Empire he intended to restore. It included among other regions two large provinces of the Sudan, Khartoum, and Gedaref, and parts of the coast, and, as a final item in this large order, Lake Victoria. The Italians might have struck earlier if they had not been busy taking Agordat and Kassala on their western borders from the Khalifa's forces. As it was, they tried to prepare the ground by playing upon the separatism of Tigré and the jealousy of Ras Mangasha and by stirring up trouble in the Danakil country. Mangasha, however, even if he put his own interests and those of Tigré first, could not very comfortably watch the Italians, who had already seized part of Tigré, strengthening their forces on his border. Early in 1895 they found that the Ras had been in touch with two chiefs who had rebelled against their new European masters. Mangasha showed fight but was defeated, and the Italians, under General Baratieri, thrusting more deeply into Ethiopia, occupied Aduwa.

This was the news which greeted Menelik when he returned from another of his victorious Galla campaigns. His reaction was slow; he sat and watched the situation for most of the year, thus allowing the Italians to send for reinforcements for their army. But in September he issued orders for mobilization. 'My countrymen', he said, in the course of his proclamation, 'until to-day I do not believe that I am guilty of having wronged you and you, to this day, have never done me any injury. To-day you who are strong, help me according to your strength, and you who are weak, thinking of your children, your wife and your faith, help me with your prayers.'[1] He called the armies to meet at three points on the way to the north and set off himself. He detached another army to deal with the Danakil, who were being stirred up by the Italians to give trouble.

The last days of the year 1895 saw the opposing armies mustered in the north. There was some preliminary skirmishing but neither side was anxious to begin the main attack upon their enemies' position in this difficult, mountainous country. Moreover, Baratieri had hopes that some of Menelik's chiefs would desert him, while Menelik, on his side, was still hoping that terms might be made. Ras Makonnen, governor of Harar, kept in touch with the Italians to the last possible moment. All through February the strange contest in patience went on. The large Ethiopian armies living on the country, and that the lean northern country, were in almost desperate case. Towards the end of the month Menelik was forced to send a third of his army away to provision themselves elsewhere. Baratieri seems to have thought that this movement signified those defections among the rases upon which he confidently reckoned. He was also spurred on by a telegram from his Prime Minister, Crispi, which ran as follows: 'This is a military phthisis, not a war . . . we are ready for any sacrifice in order to save the honour of the army and the prestige of the monarchy.' This was received on the 25th of February.[2] Baratieri chose to strike and the battle was joined on Sunday, the 1st of March 1896. The British military historian of the event has given it as his opinion that if Baratieri had waited another week, perhaps even another day, Menelik's army might have broken up and Ethiopia might have fallen piecemeal before Italian penetration.[3]

Menelik, whose intelligence work was very naturally better than that of his enemies, was ready for the attack. The trumpets from the famous Church of Zion in Aksum, described by Alvarez, were sounded. The monks went about amongst the army confessing the soldiers, encouraging the brave and excommunicating the cowardly. The Empress knelt in prayer, her face on the earth, a stone on her back in token of submission to God.[4] The event was a complete victory for the Emperor who met the Italians with his immensely superior numbers and with no vast discrepancy in the quality of his weapons. His army, in addition to the spearmen, consisted of 70,000 men armed with guns; to these the Italians opposed 17,500 of whom 11,000 were white troops. The artillery was of almost equal strength and the Ethiopians appear to have been more agile in getting their Hotchkiss mitrailleuses to the right points. Eight thousand Italians and 4,000 of their native troops were killed; 4,000 Italians, including many wounded, were captured. The Italian retreat, according to Baratieri's own despairing despatch, was almost a rout and the shame lay heavily in the memories of Italians.

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[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 1, p. 374. For further accounts of this campaign see Baratieri, O., *Memorie d'Africa, 1892–9*, Turin, 1898 (French translation, Paris, 1899), Berkeley, G. H., *The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik*, 1902, and Wylde, A., *Modern Abyssinia*, 1901. For the official Italian account of the diplomacy and war see *Livre Vert*, especially the three volumes of No. 23 (1896).

[2] Berkeley, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 257.

[4] Guèbrè Sellassié. vol. 2, pp. 440–1.

There can be no doubt that this was as decisive a battle in Ethiopia's history as that in which Grañ was killed three and a half centuries before. The one saved Ethiopia from the Muslim, the other—for a time—from Italian domination. The time gained was important. Had Italy established a protectorate at this date over Ethiopia it might very well, for internal and international reasons, have proved permanent, or, at least, very long-lived. As it was, not only did the defeat immensely stimulate the self-confidence of Ethiopia but it staved off the Italian conquest for half a century during which the country made great strides, above all in the international sphere, so that when she was annexed later, she was regarded as a nation with every claim to emancipation when the turn of military fortune should make this possible.

In the autumn the Italians signed terms of peace in which they renounced the Treaty of Uchali, accepted a frontier which, rather surprisingly, still left them the parts of Tigré north of Aduwa which they had taken, while they paid an indemnity of 10,000,000 lira for the upkeep of the prisoners, the survivors among whom were repatriated.[1]

The Italian Government declared officially that the prisoners 'had been the object of the greatest solicitude' on the part of Menelik. There is no evidence for the embittering belief that there was a wholesale emasculation of Italian prisoners. The British military historian gives the number of thirty, and it is known that some were thus mutilated by the fierce Azebu Gallas who, according to their custom, lay in wait for the imperial troops on their return. Others died on the march to Shoa. It is certain that many of the prisoners were well treated. Wylde, who visited Ethiopia shortly after the battle, among others, gives more than one proof of this.[2] A terrible vengeance had, however, fallen on the Eritrean troops who had fought, as so often in former civil wars, against the armies of the Emperor, some 400 of these having hand

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[1] It is rather surprising but characteristic, perhaps, of his Shoan outlook that Menelik made so little attempt to regain at least part of Tigré. In a recent (1944) correspondence in the Eritrean press this has been brought up against Ethiopia by Eritreans who do not wish to be rejoined to her.

[2] Berkeley, *op. cit.*, p. 347, and Wylde, pp. 385 and 402–5.

and foot cut off. Wylde, who reached Aduwa six weeks after the battle, saw the grim relics of this punishment and other signs of battle. 'I shudder when I think', he wrote, 'of the thousands of white, black, and brown men that lay dotted about this lovely country, that gave up their lives to gratify an electioneering policy in a far-off land.'[1]

It is often said that this defeat of Italy put Ethiopia on the map of the world but the conflict had arisen rather as the result of Europe putting herself upon the map of Africa. During the last few years of the nineteenth century, Ethiopia, instead of being surrounded as she always had been by the wilderness of Islam or of savagery, suddenly found European governments on all sides of her. She had Italian Eritrea on the north; Italian, British, and French Somaliland took firm shape on the east with British East Africa on the south, the Uganda Protectorate to the south-west, and the Anglo-Egyptian condominium on the west. The result of Aduwa was that Menelik's new neighbours and other European powers were obliged to take him very seriously. During the two years after that of the battle Britain, Russia, France, and Italy all established legations in Addis Ababa. The French especially strengthened their position in Ethiopia and tried to use the country as a base from which to join hands with their West African possessions. In order to do this they encouraged Menelik's claim to the Nile frontier, and an Ethiopian expedition, accompanied by French agents, only just failed through the effects of fever on the Nile plains to link up with Marchand at Fashoda in 1898.

Menelik was now free from external danger and could concentrate upon the consolidation of his internal power and his southern conquests. Not even Aduwa, however, could bring Tigré to heel though Ras Mangasha's temporary and grudging loyalty had greatly contributed to the achievement of victory. He rebelled in 1898. Menelik sent Makonnen against him and after defeat early the next year he submitted. Left in semi-liberty, he was found to be an accomplice to the revolt of his son Seyum in Tigré and was imprisoned until his death in 1907.

The turn of the century saw Menelik sitting firmly upon the uneasy throne of the King of Kings and able to concentrate upon the reforms and the foreign contacts which demanded his attention. Menelik stands out as one of the greatest of Ethiopian rulers. He had not been corrupted or brutalized by his fierce struggle for the imperial throne; he was capable of acts of mercy as well as of harshness. He was a devout member of his church, and while he was the true warrior-king of Ethiopian tradition, his mind was open to the meaning of the modern world. Nearly all the Europeans who had dealings with him speak favourably and some speak enthusiastically of him. Count Gleichen describes him thus: 'In height he stands about six feet without shoes and is stoutly built. His skin is very dark and he wears a short curly beard and moustache. His face is heavy in cast, but is redeemed from positive plainness by an extremely pleasant expression and a pair of most intelligent eyes.'[1]

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[1] Wylde, p. 173.

The early years of the twentieth century saw Ethiopia increasingly involved in the modern world. Large numbers of foreigners, advisers, contractors, concession-hunters and sheer adventurers began to come to the new capital, Addis Ababa (new flower), which was in process of construction in 1894. A French company began work on a railway which reached Diredawa near Harar and stopped there for a time in 1902 because of Menelik's jealousy of the intervention of the French Government in the company's affairs. The Ethiopians collaborated with the British in unsuccessful attempts to suppress the Mad Mullah who was directing a *jihad* from the heart of Somaliland. Boundary treaties were signed with Britain in 1897 and 1902; with France in 1897 and with Italy in 1897, 1900, and 1908. The Anglo-Ethiopian treaty of 1902 contained an important clause by which the Emperor engaged not to allow the construction of any work across the Blue Nile, Lake Tana or the Sobat river, which would arrest the flow of water to the Nile. In 1906, when it was clear that Menelik's health was declining and there was no obvious strong successor to follow him, the three limitrophe European powers signed a tripartite treaty. In this they stated that it was their common interest to maintain the integrity of Ethiopia but agreed, in the event of a break up or division of the Empire, that they would respect their existing agreements and several interests. These were for the French the railway from Jibuti; for the British and her Egyptian partner the control of the Tana and Blue Nile waters; while Italy was recognized as having an interest in linking her two colonies across Ethiopia.

Menelik met the news with a re-assertion of his sovereign rights. He was, however, in no condition to assert them with much personal energy as in this year he suffered his first paralytic stroke. He also lost Ras Makonnen, an able, intelligent and loyal supporter who had been his main agent in foreign affairs. Menelik is reported upon the occasion of his death to have wept for three days and to have cried out, 'My son, my son, in thee I have lost my right arm.'[2] In 1907, the year after these two events, Menelik introduced a council, a measure which with other constitutional events will be discussed later in its appropriate section.

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[1] Gleichen, E., *With the Mission to Menelik*, 1898, pp. 143–4.

[2] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 521, note 7.

In 1909 Menelik proclaimed his daughter's son, Lij Yasu, to be his heir and presented him to the notables with an impassioned plea for their loyalty.

This date may be taken as the end of Menelik's effective, though not of his official, reign. As his powers failed a fierce competition for influence and power set in between the leading Ethiopian personalities with the foreigners playing their own hands in the background. The first phase saw the Empress Taitu endeavouring to build up her power. She had a very powerful influence over Menelik and was in close alliance with the priests: she gradually built up her position in her sick husband's *gibbi* (palace) and attempted to control the north through her brother and other relations and dependants whom she promoted to posts in Tigré and Gojjam. The Shoan leaders, already distrustful of Lij Yasu as the son of a Wallo Galla who had formerly been a Muslim, could not stomach the control of a Tigrean Empress as well, and in 1910, inducing the Abuna to release them from their oath of loyalty to her, they re-asserted the position of Ras Tasamma, whom Menelik had named as regent.

Tasamma, who had been one of Menelik's leading generals, was a strong man but even he was hardly strong enough to check the destructive rivalries of the parties and also to keep the heir-apparent in order. Unfortunately, in 1911 the regent died and Lij Yasu, though only fifteen years old, since his father lay helpless, became the nominal ruler. Revolts broke out but Lij Yasu had the support of one of his grandfather's leading generals, Habta Giyorgis, and also of the Galla cavalry of his father, Ras Mikael. In 1912 and 1913 Lij Yasu travelled about the kingdom, hunting slaves and game in the south-west, raiding the black tribes at Goré and the Danakil in the east. In 1913 the long-delayed agreement with the French Government about the extension of the railway from the Awash river was signed and the line was finally completed in 1915.

Sometime in this same year, 1913, the exact date being concealed, Menelik died. The event had been dreaded by those who, having no interest in anarchy, were lamenting the steady decline of unity and order and expecting the Emperor's death to spell the final catastrophe. The Italians had been strengthening their position in the country in the confident expectation, which the British seem to have shared, that Ethiopia would break up. The French were pouring arms into the country up the new railway and there seemed no man capable of keeping Ethiopia in order. Lij Yasu was, however, at first accepted with little trouble, though there was the usual outbreak in Tigré. The new ruler, as he was still only seventeen, was not crowned. He had already shown himself a wild and irresponsible youth with leanings towards Islam, and the outbreak of the first world war precipitated his undoing. German and Turkish agents seized upon his Muslim tendencies to advance their interests, but in so doing they brought him into conflict with three powerful elements, the already suspicious Shoan nobility, the Ethiopian Church, and the allied powers which surrounded the country. The Shoans staged a *coup* at the capital; the Abuna freed Ethiopians from their allegiance to Lij Yasu and declared Menelik's daughter, Zawditu, as Empress, while Ras Tafari, Makonnen's son (the present Emperor Haile Selassié), was recognized as heir to the throne. A fierce battle with Mikael's army was necessary before the day was won, but the Galla chief—who had been made a king by his son—was defeated and captured while Lij Yasu fled to the Danakil country.

A period of ten years followed in which the Empress, Ras Tafari and *Fitaurari* Habta Giyorgis were the three leading figures. To the conservatism of the other two Tafari opposed his eager interest in modern developments and his realization that increasing contacts with the outer world were necessary for the security and progress of his country. He gradually built up against his rivals a position which was founded upon his claim to membership of the Solomonian family and the possession in Harar of a prosperous and well-administered province which supplied a strong army. He continued his own education and he showed some favour to foreign missions; he went to Aden and a few years later visited Europe. In 1921 Lij Yasu was captured and entrusted to Ras Kassa. This event strengthened the government which had lived in fear of renewed risings especially among the Muslims.

As will be seen later in the book, the increasing influence of Ras Tafari was shown in these years by a number of reforms. His power was strengthened by the death of the old Abuna Matthew who had intervened largely in politics. The continued support of Ras Kassa, who was trusted by the church leaders who were suspicious of Ras Tafari's reforming spirit, was a great strength to him.

In 1926 Habta Giyorgis, who had to some extent acted as a buffer between the Empress and Ras Tafari, died, and these two were left confronting each other. Zawditu appears to have been a woman of conservative leanings with neither ability nor knowledge of the world. Tafari, however, had at this time no great following in the country except amongst the few educated young men. He now showed a capacity for quick action. He took command of the army which Habta Giyorgis had inherited from Menelik; he brought troops into Addis Ababa and strengthened his forces in the nearby province of Harar. He managed to keep the friendship of his important kinsman, Ras Kassa. He exiled the *Ichegé*, an ecclesiastic who was a strong conservative opponent. Two years later, in 1928, he undermined the Empress's position by a *coup d'état* in which he surrounded Zawditu's palace, arrested the commander of her guard who had opposed him and successfully confronted the council with a demand for the title of king. About the same time, too, he worsted the reactionary governor of Sidamo, who hated the Regent's reforms, and marched his troops upon the capital. Ras Tafari and Ras Kassa surrounded his camp, seized him and exiled him to Guragé.

While Ras Tafari built up his powers to their climax, Ethiopia had been engaged in intense diplomatic activities which must now be briefly summarized. In 1923 her government, mainly, it appears, upon French advice, made an unexpected request for membership of the League of Nations. In this request she was supported not only by France but by Italy whose interests at the time dictated this move. It was left mainly to Britain to express doubts whether Ethiopia was sufficiently mature to fulfil the obligations of membership, and to ask questions about slavery and the arms traffic. Eventually, however, the admission was accepted unanimously. In 1925 there was an exchange of notes between Britain and Italy—now fascist Italy—based upon the earlier agreements between the two countries. These notes confirmed the Italian claim to regard almost the whole of Ethiopia as a sphere of influence. The Italians gained British support for their old plan of building a railway between their colonies which should pass west of Addis Ababa, while the Italians agreed to support the British in their claim for a concession to build a barrage on Lake Tana, while promising themselves not to construct upon the head-waters of the Nile any works that would sensibly affect their flow. Since the failure of Menelik's powers, the British Government had always been anxious to provide against the complete break-up of Ethiopia and the Italian protectorate or annexations that might follow, and it claimed that this agreement represented no injury to Ethiopia or any attempt to exert unfair pressure upon her. The protection of the Nile head-waters was a matter of life and death to Egypt, for whose interests Britain was largely responsible, and an important interest to the Sudan. When the notes containing the agreement were made public in accordance with the rules of the League of Nations, Ethiopia sent notes of protest to both the powers concerned who, in reply, asserted the harmlessness of their intentions.

Two more diplomatic events demand mention. In 1928 a treaty of friendship for twenty years was signed between Ethiopia and Italy. It laid down that there should be continual peace and perpetual friendship between the countries and that neither government would under any pretext 'take any action that may prejudice or damage the independence of the other'. All disputes not susceptible to ordinary diplomatic procedure should be submitted to 'a procedure of conciliation or arbitration'. An agreement was made to construct a motor-road from Assab to Dessie, each country carrying out the work within its own borders. This plan was never carried out, each side blaming the other for default. The second treaty was signed in 1930 between Ethiopia and the three powers upon her boundary to regulate the traffic in arms, since earlier attempts at international regulation had never been ratified. In order to prevent the unregulated diffusion of arms into the lawless border regions it was laid down that arms must be consigned to the central Ethiopian Government. It is interesting to notice that although the three powers might refuse the transit of arms if this should constitute a threat to peace or public order, their refusal could not be maintained 'in cases where arms and munitions are necessary to enable the legitimate authorities in Ethiopia to ensure the maintenance of public order'. In spite of this exception, the powers declared an embargo upon the sales of arms to both disputants in 1935, although its effects spelt disaster only to Ethiopia.

The year 1930 was critical for Ras Tafari. The Ogaden was in disorder and in the autumn of 1929 there was a serious rising of the ever turbulent Azebu Gallas in the north-east. The northern rases took advantage of the situation to defy the government; even Zawditu's ex-husband, Ras Gugsa Wallié who ruled in Bagemdir, rebelled. Ras Seyum in Tigré and Ras Hailu in Gojjam proved disloyal. Ras Tafari could not leave the capital himself, but he sent the war minister, Mulugeta, north and dispatched an aeroplane, the first used in Ethiopia, to the region. This scattered pamphlets in one of which the new Abuna Cyril vouched for Ras Tafari's orthodoxy. By March the rebellion was over; in April the Empress died. In November Ras Tafari, taking the throne-name of Haile Selassié, was crowned Emperor with lavish display calculated to impress the many European representatives who were invited to the coronation in which ancient Ethiopian and modern European rituals were combined, sometimes with bizarre effect.

The new Emperor was at last in undivided control at the capital. He had still, however, to meet another challenge from the dissident north. In 1932 Lij Yasu escaped and Ras Hailu of Gojjam joined him. Again the government forces prevailed and Ras Hailu was condemned to death but was reprieved by the humane Emperor who imprisoned him and deprived him of three of his provinces. In spite of these disturbances the years 1930 to 1935 saw many of the important attempts at reform, which will be described later, the new measures for training the army, the inauguration of a parliament, the development of education, the judicial reforms, the engagement of foreign advisers and the measures taken for, the modification of slavery.

This period of almost feverish reform was shadowed by the increasing menace from Italy. The well-known history of the events which led, in spite of the Emperor's conciliatory policy, to the aggression by Italy in 1935 will not be retold here; nor will the story of the liberation. Our main concern is with the institutions of Ethiopian government especially as they existed upon the eve of war with Italy, although an attempt will be made to describe their reconstruction after the 1941 war of liberation. But the whole dramatic interlude of the two wars and the Italian occupation which lies between the first and second periods of Haile Selassié's reign, dominate the present constitutional development of the country and must always be borne in mind as the succeeding chapters are read.

PART TWO

THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MONARCHY

THE DYNASTY AND THE SUCCESSION

A study of the government of Ethiopia must begin with the Emperor, the *Negusa Nagast* or King of Kings. The historical chapters have shown how the institution of monarchy, in spite of all the vicissitudes of its record, has provided the continuous shaft of unity round which the turbulent events of some 2,000 years have revolved. As a result of her constitution, or rather, perhaps, of the lack of it, Ethiopia has been even more deeply impressed than most countries by the personalities of her kings. This was never more true than in the period since the middle of the nineteenth century. Certainly in the dramatic events of our own day Haile Selassié has been the central figure not only as the leader of his people in war and diplomacy upon the international stage, but also as the chief modernizing and centralizing force in the internal life of his country.

It has already been explained that the present dynasty, to which history allows a sufficiently respectable longevity, has in the eyes of its people the much greater antiquity and sacredness given to it by the Solomonian legend. This legend was a most bold and ingenious invention. It allowed the Ethiopians, ignoring the pagan condition from which they had been converted to Christianity, to claim all the prestige and the specific divine selection which belonged to the Jews. This was not all. The alleged relationship of the royal house with Solomon brought the Ethiopian Emperors into a blood relationship with Christ in the house of David. Finally, with the rejection of the Christ by the Jews, all the promises and the honour of being a chosen nation were inherited by Ethiopia, though 'Rome' was admitted to some share in the divine benefits. It is because of the importance of this legend which has dominated Ethiopian thought for so many centuries that extracts from the *Kebra Nagast* have been given in an appendix.[1]

It was, thus, the first care of the Emperors to claim membership of the Solomonian line. The present Emperor uses in public documents and pronouncements the ancient formula, 'The Lion of the Tribe of Judah has conquered, the Elect of God, King of the Kings of Ethiopia', or more briefly upon his laws, 'Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God', and the sceptre presented to Haile Selassié by King George V at his coronation was designed by Sir Wallis Budge as an elaborate memorial to this legend of Hebraic origin.[2] It has already been shown that the claim of descent from Solomon (upon which were based the so-called restorations of the dynasty in 1270 and in 1889 in the person of Menelik II), is unhistorical. It is not even certain whether the line of the present dynasty can be traced back as far as the restoration of the thirteenth century. In spite of the fact that the evidence is all presented by chroniclers imbued with the desire to affirm this sacred and politically essential continuity, a careful examination of the genealogies reveals at least two very uncertain links in the chain in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The lavish concubinage of princely houses in Ethiopia, the frequency of divorce, and the tolerant attitude towards illegitimacy together make the precise tracing of a dynasty almost impossible.

In our context, however, significance lies with the firm and universal belief of a people rather than with historical accuracy. It would be impossible to exaggerate the importance of this belief which gave the rulers of the country a sacred supremacy in the minds of their subjects. One result was that usurpers were often haunted by a consciousness of the weakness of their position. Bruce relates how Yustos confessed: 'I have made myself king as much as one can be that is not of the royal family, for I am but a private man, son of a subject.'[3] The ceaseless rebellions which troubled Ras Ali were largely due to the unconstitutional nature of his position as mayor of the palace, and the violent doings of Theodore may have sprung from his sense of the same dynastic weakness. Menelik could claim that his seizure of imperial power was a restoration of the true line after a series of usurpations, and it is an essential element in the authority of Haile Selassié that he is regarded as the direct descendant of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.[4] In the modern written constitution of 1931 the claim is made that the royal line 'descends without interruption from the dynasty of Menelik 1st, son of King Solomon of Jerusalem and the Queen of Ethiopia, known as the Queen of Sheba'. (Chapter I, article 3.)

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[1] See Appendix A.

[2] Budge, E. A. W., *Notes on the Sceptres Presented to the Emperor and Empress*, 1931.

[3] Bruce, vol. 2, p. 575.

[4] See the *Speech of the Bajirond Tekla Hawariat on the Occasion of the Grant of a Constitution, etc.*, second edition, Addis Ababa, 1942, pp. 8–9.

It is interesting to notice that this constitution was promulgated in the spirit of a contract between the people as a whole and the Solomonian dynasty, 'a covenant and co-operation between the Emperor and the people', by which his rights and powers are recognized. These are to be his eternal personal attributes, which are to pass 'according to the Law of Inheritance unto his children . . . but not pass unto other dynasties. It is the whole of the Ethiopian people who have covenanted to be custodians of this fact.'[1] Thus the present Emperor bases his power upon both divine right and a social contract between the people and his dynasty.

The references in the constitution to the succession, however, do not define its exact form but merely refer to the 'law of the Imperial House'. It would be difficult to deduce from Ethiopian history the nature of this law. Strict primogeniture has seldom been the rule in countries where mature ability was required in the ruler. In Ethiopia, as elsewhere in similar historical conditions, this ability generally had to be proved by the claimant in battle, and it was necessary to secure his position further by isolating all other eligible royal princes upon an inaccessible mountain set aside for this purpose. The royal irregularities to which reference has just been made would add to the difficulty of deciding upon the legal heir. In answer to Alvarez' questioning, some Ethiopians said that succession was by primogeniture, some said, 'the most apt and of most judgment inherited; others say that he inherited who had the most adherents'. The Abuna and the Queen Mother told him that they had made the present king, 'because they had all the great men in their hands. Thus it appears to me that, beyond primogeniture, adherence enters into the question.'[2]

Ras Kassa and *Dejazmach* Taye, two of Haile Selassie's relatives, belonged to senior branches of the dynasty, and in fact neither asserted his claims.[3] The present Emperor's position appears to be practically as well as dynastically strong. Born in 1892, he is still in the prime of life, and with three sons, two of whom already hold high office, and several grandchildren—though none, as yet, by his sons—may hope to provide from his family at least one successor of sufficient merit.

THE IMPERIAL POWERS

The student who searches the records of Ethiopia for a definition of the Emperor's powers will be bewildered by the striking contradictions he will find upon this subject, from the earliest until the latest days. On the one hand he will read in the extremest terms that the Emperor is an absolute king; a few pages later he will come across striking proofs of the limitations of his power. In the seventeenth century we are told by Tellez, whose story is full of rebellions and civil wars, that all Ethiopians call themselves the Emperor's slaves, and that he is 'absolute lord of all the lands within his dominions.'[1] 'The power of the Abyssinian kings is absolute, as well in ecclesiastical as in civil affairs,' says Ludolphus, writing in the same troubled century.[2] A hundred years or more later Bruce, after several years in the country, lays down, 'The Kings of Abyssinia are above all laws. They are supreme in all causes, ecclesiastical and civil; the land and persons of all their subjects are equally their property and every inhabitant of the kingdom is born their slave.' Yet his whole picture of the king he knew is of his weakness before the power of a great ras and the rebellions of the people. The same contradiction strikes us in the next century when Plowden asserts that all but the Abuna are the servants of the ruler, but elsewhere admits that the country is falling into decline from government by one absolute sovereign into subdivisions of small tribes.[3] To take our last example from this century, an official British report of 1906 states that Menelik is an absolute despot and a few paragraphs later remarks that his power does not extend twenty miles beyond his palace while elsewhere we read that travellers carrying Menelik's passport were refused entry into Gojjam.[4]

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9. [2] Alvarez, p. 143. [3] See genealogy at the end of the book.

A considerable gap between the powers and the pretensions of monarchies is no new thing in history but in Ethiopia the gap seems, for much of her record, to have been unusually wide. Ludolphus, indeed, as a thoughtful historian was struck by this and remarks rather drily, 'So great and so absolute a power, and so uncontrollable a dominion over their subjects, one would think, should render the Kings of Ethiopia vastly potent: and so, no doubt, it would, if other things were correspondent.'[5]

We shall understand the Ethiopian monarchy better if we try to discover what were these other things that were so seldom correspondent. To the student who has formed his ideas of constitutional development upon the histories of European nations, and above all upon those of the seemingly comparable medieval kings of France and Britain, it is almost unbelievable that a monarchy that can claim some 2,000 years of almost unbroken rule to its credit failed in that period to build up any kind of administrative framework through which to exercise the absolute powers with which, by tradition and consent, it was endowed.

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[1] Tellez, pp. 53 and 63. [2] Ludolphus, p. 198. [3] Also Hotten, p. 126.

[4] Hayes, A., *The Source of the Blue Nile*, 1905, pp. 104–5.

[5] Ludolphus, p. 202.

A number of reasons may be found for this failure, but only three will be suggested here. The first is that the Ethiopian monarchy was rooted in very different soil from that of western Europe. It was the very ancient soil which, in the lands where three continents come together, had been breeding mysterious divine kingships several thousand years before the hardy, homespun leaders of the western nations knocked their tribes into unity. There are signs that the Ethiopian monarchy, like the monarchies of Kaffa, Janjiro and other neighbouring states, was founded upon the cult of divinity upon which had been grafted Jewish and Christian enhancements of its sacredness. The first full description of the King of Kings that we have shows him being approached through a succession of curtained enclosures between followers holding lighted candles. Beyond these curtains were others of still richer texture, and beyond these a dais made of rich and splendid carpets. 'In front of this dais were other curtains of much greater splendour, and whilst we were stopping before them they opened them in two parts, for they were drawn together, and there we saw Prester John sitting on a platform of six steps very richly adorned. He had on his head a high crown of gold and silver . . . and a silver cross in his hand; there was a piece of blue taffeta before his face which covered his mouth and beard, and from time to time they lowered it and the whole of his face appeared, and again they raised it. . . . The Prester was dressed in a rich robe of brocade . . . and he was sitting as they paint God the Father on the wall.'[1] Here was the Christian descendant of the divine king of the great pagan civilizations of the Near East.

A hundred years later there seems to have been some relaxation of the Emperor's sacred seclusion, for though at first he spoke to no man and was seen by very few, as the century wore on he became a little more familiar and allowed himself to be seen and to be talked to.[2] In Bruce's day, however, old custom was still strong. The Emperor could be approached only with a complete prostration in which the body must be flat, the forehead on the earth, and the man must lie there until ordered to rise. 'Formerly', says Bruce, 'his face was never seen, nor any part of him, except sometimes his foot. . . . Even yet he covers his face in audiences. . . .' while in Council he was always shut up in a kind of box at the head of the Council table.[3] Even his foot must never be set to the ground outside his palace.[4] One day when Bruce was riding with him a low branch over his path caught away the cloth which covered the Emperor's head and shoulders, and revealed him to the people. He stopped and called for the local headman who came running up with his son. The Emperor ordered them both to be killed immediately to wipe out the disgrace of his exposure.[1]

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[1] Alvarez, pp. 202–3.

[2] Tellez, p. 54.

[3] Bruce, vol. 3, pp. 265–6.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 265.

According to the tradition of the divine king who expresses in his own life and body the health and well-being of the whole community, no ruler of Ethiopia should have any physical defect or deformity. It was therefore the custom to mutilate any possible rival to the throne who had not been disposed of in some other way.[2] It may have been a relic of this earlier divinity still hanging around the throne that even in the days of the practical Menelik whenever, at a feast, he took up his flask of *tej* (native mead), his attendants raised their *shammas* (toga-like garments) to hide him, though the custom that still clung to this ancient drink had not attached itself to the newer beverage of coffee. On the other hand, fear of eating and drinking in public is common in Ethiopia because of the belief in the evil eye. Certainly the conception of the divine king should not be pressed too far as surviving consciously in modern Ethiopian belief. Yet the widespread nature of taboos about the exposure of the body and other matters may mean only that such attitudes applied with special force to the most sacred body in the community, that of the ruler.[3] While monarchy in the person of the modern-minded Haile Selassié seems no longer to trail any visible clouds of this ancient and divine glory, the ceremonies in which the present Emperor goes out to cut the first hay and dig the first sod to inaugurate the season's work may be derived from this very ancient tradition. The existence of the ancient religious conceptions prevalent until a few centuries ago may help to explain to the utilitarian western mind not only the survival power of this ancient monarchy, but also that it could remain in its ideas and institutions in a static position for an immense period of time.

Another obvious reason for constitutional stagnation lies in the material backwardness of the people in industry, trade, currency, military organization, and especially in the art of building. The last deficiency is worth comment. It is difficult to visualize the growth of a central government in Britain having no local habitation or name, no houses for court, council, treasury or archives. But in Ethiopia, except for the largely unhappy Gondar interlude, from that early century when Aksum fell into decline until the most recent days, the country had no true capital.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 66–7. [2] *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 278.

[3] Wellby, p. 73. It is still possible to see in Africa widespread evidences of this belief reaching from Ethiopia almost to the Atlantic coast. I have myself seen in Nigeria attendants brushing out the footmarks of a chief with whom I was walking, since the divine leave no traces; and when I visited the King of the Shilluk on the Upper Nile, the attendant hid his face each time the divinity drank. Until recently some of the Yoruba chiefs could be approached only by men half-stripped—which was the custom also in Ethiopia—and with their hair cut in a peculiar style. For a brief but excellent study of this belief in north-eastern Africa see Seligman, C. G., *Egypt and Negro Africa*, 1934. Also Meek, C. K., *A Sudanese Kingdom*, 1931, especially chapter 2.

Foreign travellers from 1520 to 1890 have described in marvelling terms the vast shifting city of tents in which Ethiopian kings moved about the country. Round the central red tent of the Emperor were grouped large numbers of other royal tents for counsellors, servants and wives, for churches, kitchens, and other purposes. Round these again, in a known and exact order which allowed the vast army of tents to spring up as soon as that of the Emperor was pitched, all the thousands of great and little men in the royal train grouped themselves and their armies. It was magnificent in its way, but it did not make for firm and progressive administration. True, the Emperors did have some fixed centres of their power, but the Ethiopians since the great days of Aksum had lost the art of building, and none of these, except for a period Gondar, where under foreign inspiration some impressive castles were put up in the seventeenth century, ever became real capitals. In 1913 Gondar was described as 'merely a collection of squalid huts clustered round the ruins of its former greatness'.[2] The fulcrum of power tended to shift in a southerly direction. After leaving Aksum and Lasta it rested, among other places, at Gondar, Debra Tabor, Magdala, Ankober and Entoto. It was Menelik who made Addis Ababa the terminus of that stabilizing new factor, the railway, and who employed an Italian architect to build a palace and even Menelik at one time wanted to move on. From the last turn of the centuries, therefore, a capital city has been in the making, but it could not be expected that it would at once develop the normal administrative relationships of a modern capital with its provinces.

The third obstacle to the development of centralized institutions was, as we have seen, the physical nature of the country, with its high mountains and deep cut valleys, and the heavy rains which for considerable periods of the year make already difficult communications impossible to all but the most resolute travellers prepared to swim the swollen rivers.

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[1] Aksum remained the traditional place for the crowning of kings. The Shoan Emperor, Menelik, however, refused to go there for this purpose, and in this he has been followed by Haile Selassié.

[2] *Diplomatic and Consular Report on the Trade of Abyssinia*, Cmd. 7620–32, p. 6.

We have therefore to consider a monarchy theoretically absolute, made triply sacred by the religious majesty of the Solomonian legend, by the even older sanctions of the divine kingship, and by its Christian leadership, and yet lacking nearly all those continuous and visible institutions by which absolute power has in most countries been expressed in administrative control. We have records which show how slight at most times was the royal power over the constituent kingdoms and provinces of the realm and how frequent were the periods of disorder, rebellion and civil war. Yet this kingship over kings showed itself immensely enduring; it was never wholly rejected either in theory or in fact. The power of the monarchy may be visualized as a magnificent and lofty throne which was always standing ready for the dynast who had the military power and ability to climb up into it. The religious character of the throne insured that it would never be pulled down by so religious a people as the Ethiopians, and whenever a ruler was able, as many were, to mount all the steps that led to the high seat of power he would find no theoretical limits to its exercise.

Nor would he find the two great practical limits which in western Europe checked the full growth of absolutism, the nobility and the church. These institutions will be considered later; we must remark here, however, that though the word feudal is freely used of Ethiopia, there never developed in that country a hereditary caste of nobility able to extort contracts about its powers and rights from its kings. As for the church, the kings were its undoubted heads, and no Abuna imported from a feeble and remote church in a Muslim country was able to lead his clergy with the authority of the medieval archbishops, supported by the head of the hierarchy of western Christendom.

Ethiopian history shows clearly what were the steps which led up to the height of the throne. The first was undoubtedly military power, especially since, by the doctrine of the monarchy about the end of the seventeenth century, divine right or *de facto* power had equally to be asserted by force by those who wished to bear the rather ominous title of King of Kings. It will have been clear from the historical introduction that in the last hundred years all Ethiopian rulers have had to fight for their thrones, and that they based their power upon the solid foundation of a principality and a loyal army of their own: from this they built up their wider authority with the help of diplomacy, dynastic marriages and other buttresses. This fact is true of the present Emperor, and further light will be thrown upon the character of the imperial power if we review the steps taken by Haile Selassié to obtain and to secure it.

THE PRESENT EMPEROR

As a young man there was nothing to mark out Tafari, as he then was, from several other potential claimants to the throne. His advantages consisted in his blood—but this he shared with others—in the reputation and status of his father, Ras Makonnen, the Emperor Menelik's first cousin, but still more in the possession of the rich, newly acquired province of Harar and of the army that it could supply close to the new capital. Lij Yasu's mistake in 1916 in backing the Germans and the Muslims opened to Tafari an unexpected opportunity, and from that moment his moves towards supreme power were as careful and deliberate as those in a long game of chess. There seemed for a time no certainty that he would succeed. As late as 1923 it was thought unlikely by close observers, who marked his slight physique and humane and reserved temperament, that he would outplay those with stronger claims or greater apparent virility. Among his moves were the long struggle to assert himself over the other leading personalities at the court; the gradual increase of his estates with their revenue and soldiers; and the taking over of the imperial troops upon the death in 1927 of Menelik's old general, Habta Giyorgis. After his successful emergence from a palace revolt in 1928 and a victorious expedition against the Empress's ex-husband Ras Gugsa in 1930, he was able, after her subsequent and opportune death, to succeed to the throne. Even after a coronation in which the lavish display was due as much to policy as to love of pageantry, the game was not completely won; he had to deal with a serious conspiracy in which Ras Hailu of Gojjam procured the escape of Lij Yasu. The moves by which, at the centre and in the provinces during his first five years' rule as Emperor, he strengthened the power he had gained were as carefully co-ordinated as those which had won him the throne. Some of them will appear in the following description of his government. It will also appear that the dominant object of his policy has been, in internal affairs, to centralize and to modernize Ethiopian government under the crown and, externally, to raise her status among the nations. In studying these attempts, the limitations imposed upon the Emperor by the nature of his power and the character of the country should always be borne in mind.

The Emperor's house, with its throne-room and great banqueting hall, was the nucleus of a network of buildings and courtyards which accommodated large numbers of guests, retainers, servants, soldiers and workmen, and was collectively known as the *Gibbi*. Here, in a country where, as the records of leading families bear abundant witness, marital relationships are very lax, the present Emperor lived a quiet and model life with his wife and children.

All observers agree that he worked very hard for long hours of every day. The country was ruled from the palace, and to the Emperor's heavy executive and judicial work was added the strain of innumerable interviews, which were demanded alike by Ethiopian traditions of royal accessibility and by the prestige of the foreign diplomats. There was greater formality than in Menelik's day, though even that Emperor reproved Prince Henry of Orleans for appearing before him in shooting costume by asking: 'Who is this person who does not know how to appear before a king?'[1] Under the present régime, partly perhaps through the influence of the diplomats themselves, interviews with the Emperor became increasingly formal both in tone and dress, and, though the Emperor was always gracious and natural with foreigners, there were few with whom he was on informal or intimate terms. The power-politics of the European nations, and the resulting tensions and jealousies between their representatives at the capital, provided an uneasy political atmosphere in which the Emperor lived and worked. This was not lightened by the heavy anxieties in the sphere of home affairs in which, since few, indeed, of his own subjects were qualified either to understand his purposes or to assist intelligently in their execution, he had to bear a crushing load not only of responsibility but also of routine administration. Since his return, however, as will shortly be shown, the Emperor has developed further the Council of Ministers which he had initiated before the Italian war.

The Emperor had, in addition, to give much time to the duty of hospitality, which he interpreted most liberally both towards Europeans, who were entertained to dinners and balls in European fashion, and, as a medieval king, to thousands of his own subjects, who enjoyed those feasts of raw meat and mead which have astonished all foreign travellers since the sixteenth century, but which in recent years have been held without the presence of European guests. The Emperor, as head of the church and also as a very devout Christian, frequently attended services at the many churches. He also paraded with his rases and courtiers upon the numerous festivals.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Emperor often worked sixteen hours out of the twenty-four. Menelik, like other progressive rulers of backward people in earlier periods, had set the example, rising at three o'clock in the morning to begin his day's work.[2] Haile Selassié was seldom able to leave Addis Ababa even for a day. This meant, unfortunately, that his people had little personal knowledge of him at least during the first period of his reign. Large numbers must, however, have seen him as a result of the mobilization of 1935 and the two campaigns in which he has fought, and since his return to the throne he has visited many of his provinces. It is possible that in the isolation and dangers of his position he, like Menelik before him, carried centralization in his own person too far. In Menelik's time, as his powers of work declined, a paralysis crept over his government. He seemed unable to choose or to trust a subordinate; it was necessary to have his permission to purchase firewood outside the Addis Ababa market. Before the Italian war the present Emperor found himself obliged to attend even to such details as the selection of mules for his army. Because of the great difficulty of training his assistants in a sense of responsibility state business became congested upon his own desk. There is evidence that congestion and insufficient delegation are by no means things of the past.

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[1] Wellby, p. 9.

[2] Gleichen, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

It may be that the old system, before the capital was fixed, by which the Emperor was perpetually on tour, strengthened his position both with the nobles and with the people. But these customary peregrinations were hardly compatible with the creation of a modern administration in which the Emperor, in Bagehot's terms, has to supply both the decorative and effective parts of government, since he is the monarch, the prime minister and even, to a large extent, the chief executive agent. In this, as in other ways, Ethiopia feels the strain of her sudden transition from the medieval to the modern.

It is, however, advisable, before leaving the subject of the monarchy, to repeat the warning given in the preface against treating all differences between Ethiopian and European, especially British, institutions as depreciations of the former, a temptation to which the writer may occasionally in appearance or, indeed, in reality give way. It is especially relevant to the last part of this chapter to remark that the Ethiopians have their own special attitude in this matter of the delegation of responsibility. They have profound reverence for their great men, above all for their monarch, and to them it is a diminution of that greatness for subordinates to take decisions and perform actions which seem to belong to their superiors. The superior, upon his side, believes that in delegating he is lowering his status in the eyes of his subordinates. This deep-seated feeling will not easily be changed, though it clearly strikes at the western conception of democracy and of administrative devolution, both of which Ethiopia is formally adopting. We must hope that Ethiopia will be able to carry out changes that are really necessary for her well-being, while keeping what is fundamental and valuable in the spirit of her ancient culture. No foreign observer and, indeed, no single native reformer can instruct her as to how this should be done. There can be little doubt that, whatever developments and adjustments there may be, a strong monarchy will for many years remain the indispensable condition of Ethiopian progress.[1]

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[1] The writer is indebted for the central idea in this conclusion to a close observer of Ethiopian affairs, whose name may not be given.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CENTRAL INSTITUTIONS

THE RULING CLASS

Before describing the ministries and central government developed by Menelik and Haile Selassié, it is necessary to refer to those who stand about the throne and form—though the term will need much qualification—the official ruling class. Some of the most important features of their position will be described further in the chapter on the provinces.

The title of *Negusa Nagast*, King of Kings, assumes the existence of a number of subordinate kings. These appear to have been men chosen for high honours but were not, at least in modern times, always endowed with any corresponding duties. It lay with the *Negusa Nagast* to confer the title of *Negus*, which was not heritable, but it is not easy to find out at any given date in history how many men, if any, were holding this rank. At the end of the middle ages and for long afterwards, the governor of the northern provinces held the title of *Bahr-nagash*, or king of the sea. In recent times, the Emperor John crowned two kings, Menelik of Shoa and Takla Haimanot of Gojjam. Menelik crowned Ras Gobana as king of Kaffa, a title later held by Lij Yasu.[1] When the latter came to power in 1914, he gave the title to his Galla father, Ras Mikael, and the Empress Zawditu in 1917 honoured in this way her relation Ras Walda Giyorgis. This was the last occasion upon which the title has been given except for the grant of this dignity by the Empress Zawditu to Ras Tafari in 1928. The present Emperor, in conformity with his policy of centralization, has refused to confer it, thereby probably disappointing certain expectations at the time of his coronation.

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[1] Bieber, F. J., *Kaffa, ein altkuschitisches Volkstum in Inner Afrika*, Münster, 1920, vol. 1, pp. 93, 105.

The title next in importance was that of ras. Like most Ethiopian titles, it is military in origin and corresponds roughly to that of our marshal. The rases were not, as is sometimes thought, an hereditary aristocracy with a sense of corporate status as against the king, like the nobility of medieval Europe. The title was given by the Emperor. It was never taken away but it did not descend to the son. Nor was it always given to the governor of a province. It was the policy of Ethiopian rulers, at least as far back as the sixteenth century, to check the development of great families with local connections by transferring the heads of provinces and by alternating rases with men of lower rank in the same governorship. Thus, when Ras Makonnen died in 1906, although Menelik allowed Makonnen's natural son, Yilma, to succeed him in Harar, he limited his powers and did not make him a ras. Similarly when Tafari in turn succeeded his half-brother he had to gain the title on his own merits.

In modern times the title has been given sparingly, especially by the present Emperor. It may be interesting to describe briefly the rases existing at the time of the Italian invasion in order to show what type of man held this important title.

Ras Kassa, the Emperor's kinsman, was in command of the armies of the northern territories of Lasta and Bagemdir and of the district of Salale, between Addis Ababa and the Blue Nile, where he lived. As a member of a senior branch of the family, he had a stronger claim to the throne than the present Emperor, but the great nobles who combined to dethrone Lij Yasu preferred to appoint Ras Tafari as Regent and heir.[1] Ras Kassa was the jailer of the ex-Emperor Lij Yasu, and as such was a powerful factor in the kingdom, for Lij Yasu had many adherents. When in 1932 the latter escaped, Ras Kassa's position was much weakened and the Emperor's fears of a potential rival were allayed. Ras Kassa is a religious man without military ambitions. He accompanied the Emperor to England in his exile. The Emperor owes much both to his help and to his restraint. Since the restoration, though still a member of the Crown Council, he has largely retired from public life; he is said to be unpopular in the country. His three elder sons were all killed by the Italians. His fourth son is governor of Wallaga and one of his grandsons is being educated in England.

Ras Seyum, the ras of Tigré, led the armies of that province in person. He is the natural grandson of the Emperor John, the Tigréan chief who seized the throne in 1872. Owing to his having taken sides with Lij Yasu, the ex-Emperor, in 1915, he was kept at Addis Ababa for some time as prisoner on parole, but was afterwards allowed to return to his province. It has already been explained that, as a great ras descended from an Emperor, he was a man to be watched, but in recent years he acted as a loyal supporter of the Emperor and fought resolutely against the Italians before submitting to their rule. His daughter married the present Crown Prince in 1932, but was divorced about 1944 because she had not produced an heir. (Afterwards the Crown Prince married again.) Since the restoration the Emperor has kept him at the capital, presumably because he did not feel able to trust him to return to Tigré, though it is understood he is titular governor-general of that province. He attends the Crown Council.

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[1] See genealogy at the end of the book.

Ras Hailu, born in 1875, is the only surviving but natural son of *Negus* Takla Haimanot of Gojjam. He married a sister of Ras Kabbada. His daughter had a son by Lij Yasu. He proved a grasping governor of Gojjam. He was tried and convicted for his depredations, and in 1932 was condemned to death for treason in conniving at the escape of Lij Yasu. The sentence was commuted to imprisonment, from which he was released by the Emperor on the latter's flight to Europe. He co-operated with the Italians until his provincial capital of Debra Markos was almost overrun. Since the restoration the Emperor has kept him under surveillance, but not in captivity, at the capital.

Ras Imru is a Shoan noble and relative of the Emperor and one of the outstanding figures in Ethiopia. His bravery in confronting Lij Yasu, who had made him prisoner, is said to have won him great respect. A loyal supporter of the Emperor, he was made governor of Harar, then of Wallo. He was appointed ras and governor-general of Bagemdir. A fine general, he was one of the last to surrender to the Italians, and was imprisoned in Italy. After holding important governorships, he has recently been sent as minister to Washington. He is about fifty years old.

Ras Desta was a Shoan noble; he married the Emperor's eldest daughter, by whom he had two sons and four daughters. He rendered services to the Emperor when the latter was Regent, and captured the ex-Emperor Lij Yasu when he escaped in 1932. He was a relatively enlightened governor and was sent by the Emperor to Sidamo and Borana. He was a courageous leader and long after the Emperor's flight he continued the struggle and was ultimately defeated, captured, and murdered by the Italians.

Ras Getachew is a relative of the Empress, connected with the great Galla families of Wallo, and son of one of the Emperor Menelik's principal generals, Ras Abbata. He was created ras in 1933, and commanded the army drawn from the troops stationed in south-west Ethiopia. He was a bad governor and held his position, despite the lack of respect which he inspired, only by virtue of his rank. He went over to the Italians and after the restoration was left in 'protective custody' at Jimma. In 1944 he was pardoned by the Emperor (who is reported to have said, 'I pardon you, but I don't know if God will'), but on his way to Addis Ababa he was stopped and forced to live in a remote region. He was last reported in Arusi.

Ras Mulugeta was Minister of War and commanded the main Shoan army. He was born in 1871 and fought in the wars of the Emperor Menelik. He led the imperial army, and defeated Ras Gugsa Wallié, of the northern Amhara province of Bagemdir, when the latter revolted against the Emperor in 1930. He was a fine type of Ethiopian of the old school. He was killed by the dissident northern Gallas in 1936, when fighting against the Italians.

Ras Kabbada was the son of a ras who was himself of Gojjam peasant stock. He was not a prominent figure in Ethiopian life in recent years, though he held many governorships. He had been an opponent of the present Emperor when the latter was Regent and was never readmitted to favour. He died during the Italian occupation.

Two additions may be made to this list since they throw some light upon the position of the rases.

Dejazmach Taye is of royal birth and, like Ras Kassa, he is in more direct descent to the throne than the present Emperor. In spite of his relationship to the latter he was not created a ras but was relegated to the governorship of the distant and insignificant negroid provinces of Benesso and Gurafarda. He is now resident in Addis Ababa without any office.

Dejazmach Haile Selassié Gugsa is the son of Ras Gugsa Araya, who died in 1932. He is sometimes erroneously known as Ras Gugsa on account of his appointment to that rank by the Italians after he deserted the Emperor in 1935. Ras Gugsa Araya was the grandson of the Emperor John by a legitimate son, and with Ras Seyum (grandson by a natural son) shared the rule of Tigré. His son succeeded to part of his father's territory and married the Emperor's daughter. H. S. Gugsa Araya is now in exile as a result of action by the British who occupied his part of Tigré at the time of the reconquest, but were unwilling to hand him over to the Emperor. If this was out of fear for his fate, there was nothing in the Emperor's dealings with traitors to justify it. It was reported during 1946, however, that he had been handed over and, according to the latest reports, is to face his trial for treason.

It will be seen that two of the rases are members of the Emperor's family; one is related to the Empress; three have been promoted for special services; and three—if Ras Gugsa Araya is included—were members of important families with hereditary connections in Tigré and Gojjam.

The best commentary upon the rases' position *vis-à-vis* the present Emperor is that Ras Hailu twice worked against him; that Ras Gugsa's son deserted to the Italians before the outbreak of war; and that Haile Selassié found it advisable to endeavour to bind two of these families to him by marrying his daughter (who died in 1933) to Haile Selassié Gugsa and his eldest son to the daughter of Ras Seyum. He took Ras Seyum with him during his visit to Europe in 1924, and he found it necessary to keep Ras Hailu, Ras Seyum, and Ras Gugsa close to his person between 1930 and 1932. He felt strong enough, however, to allow Ras Seyum and Ras Gugsa to return to Tigré and take over parts of their province in 1932. He took both these rases with him on the only occasion upon which he left the country between his coronation and his flight to England in 1936, when he went to Jibuti and Aden in 1933. It appears that, as a result of their relations with the Italians, the Rases Hailu and Seyum have been obliged to remain under surveillance in Addis Ababa since the Emperor's return.

It will be seen from this that the rases whom Haile Selassié had to watch were only three in number. On the other hand, if at any time, especially before he had built up the nucleus of a well-armed Imperial Guard, he had pressed his reforms to a point where they would have completely alienated the church and upper classes and at the same time offended one or two of his more trusted supporters, he might have had to face a sudden uprising led by one of the leading rases.

Among the very few rases to be created since the restoration are the following:

Ras Ababa Aregai. He was the great patriot leader who held out unconquered in the mountains until the restoration and made a dramatic entry into the capital with his men to rejoin the Emperor. At the restoration he was made a ras and became nominal Minister of War; he leaves most of the work to Colonel Abiye, husband of the late Princess Tsahai, while he governs in Tigré. His son is being educated in England.

Ras Birru Walda Gabriel. He was the Minister of War, with rank of *Fitaurari*, before Ras Mulugeta. He fought at the Emperor's side during the 1935–6 campaign, and fled as a refugee to Jerusalem. He rejoined the Emperor at Khartoum and led the patriot mission to raise the revolt in Bagemdir. Governor of Kaffa and Jimma after the restoration, he died in 1945. He married first a niece of the Empress and second a niece of the late Ras Desta.

Ras Adafrisau. He is an officer of the old school, who commanded the Emperor's personal guard during the 1935–6 campaign. He was appointed governor-general of Sidamo with rank of ras at the restoration.

Ras Hailu Belau. He is a grandson of *Negus* Takla Haimanot and the nephew of Ras Hailu (previously mentioned). He did good service during the patriot campaign and was made governor-general of Gojjam at the restoration, probably on account of that province's attachment to the Takla Haimanot dynasty. He is said to be a man of the old school of provincial potentates.

Below the rases come the following titles which, since the army was always the core of the political structure, were mostly military, even though much of the work performed by the holders was of civil nature. The English equivalent is, of course, only approximate. Where a fuller translation is given in brackets it is taken from the glossary in Walker's *The Abyssinian at Home.*[1]

Liqamakwas.	Officer who impersonates the Emperor in time of war. There are only two.
Dejazmach.	('One who in war camps near the door of the Emperor's tent.' Hence often a governor of high rank.)
Fitaurari.[2]	('Leader of the advance guard.')
Grazmach.	Commander of the left wing.
Kenyazmach.	Commander of the right wing, or major.
Balamberas.	Commander of a fort.
Shelaka.	Head of 1,000 men.
Metwalaka.	Head of 100 men.
Hamsalaka.	Head of 50 men.
Asralaka.	Head of 10 men.

The more important non-military titles were borne by men grouped about the Emperor and employed in civil capacities. In addition to the religious offices, which will be mentioned later, there was the *Afa Negus* (mouth of the king, and the chief judge), the *Tsahafe Tezaz* (the Privy Seal, through whose hands all the royal correspondence passed), the *Bajirond* (the treasurer), the *Belatengetta* (a title of honour given to learned men), the *Kantiba* (mayor), the *Nagadras* (chief of merchants), the last two titles being held also by lesser officers outside Addis Ababa. There will, however, be much more to say of the provincial governors in a later chapter. Below the titles given above came large numbers of lesser officials employed about the court.

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[1] Walker, C. H., *The Abyssinian at Home*, 1933.

[2] There is also the Imperial Fitaurari who is the equivalent of the Chief of the General Staff, a very important person in the Emperor's entourage.

THE COUNCIL

We might have expected, from European analogies of somewhat similar societies, to find the rases and other leading officers expressing their influence through an important council. While, however, there are occasional references in accounts of Ethiopia to a council or to counsellors, no institution fulfilling clearly-defined functions similar to those of either the English Privy Council or House of Lords has ever taken clear constitutional shape. In 1942, indeed, the Emperor, though he was here speaking of the Chamber of Deputies, said that 'until now there did not exist any organized Council in Ethiopia'.[1]

Recent history, as far as it is possible to reconstruct it, presents a somewhat confusing picture. In 1898 Gleichen asserted that Menelik had neither ministers nor officers of state but kept all the government in his own hands.[2] Three years later Wellby wrote that Menelik always took counsel of his chiefs.[3] British official reports of 1906 state that he was jealous of delegating his authority.

How novel was the idea of a council, at least in Menelik's reign, is shown by the treatment of this subject by his Ethiopian biographer. 'It was at this time that the Emperor Menelik thought of implanting European customs in our country of Ethiopia. Thus, in the year 1900 he nominated, as in Europe, some ministers....' He then goes on to list the holders of the nine new offices and proceeds to describe the law that was passed 'the first time that the ministers met together in Council.'[4] As his physical powers declined, more is heard of a council, but in 1910 it is recorded that the Empress Taitu was absorbing all power into her own hands and that the councillors seemed incapable of taking responsibility and were bent only upon enriching themselves. In 1911 Lij Yasu was coming to the front, and the Shoan chiefs, alarmed by his favours to Muslims, made him promise to work through his council. Lij Yasu, however, took his own way, one which led to his fall in 1916.

Monsieur de Coppet records that in 1918, following a popular movement, all the councillors were sent back to their provinces. The following year, however, some more ministers were appointed, and it appears that, in spite of various vicissitudes,[5] the Empress Zawditu maintained the council as a check upon Ras Tafari's growing authority. In 1927 there was a Council of Regency consisting of Ras Tafari, Habta Giyorgis,

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[1] Speech printed in pamphlet entitled *The Emperor of Ethiopia leads his People*, published by the Abyssinia Association, 1943, p. 7.

[2] Gleichen, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

[3] Wellby, p. 89.

[4] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, pp. 527–8.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 528, note 10.

Ras Kassa, and the Privy Seal. Mention is also made of an advisory council having been reduced from eighteen to fifteen members in this year. It contained several departmental ministers and the Abuna, who upon his death in this year was replaced temporarily by the reactionary *Ichegé*, the administrative head of the church. It is worth noting that neither Ras Seyum nor Ras Hailu were members. As Ras Tafari's power rose, so did that of the council dwindle. Writing in 1928 de Coppet says that nothing that could be called a ministry existed. In 1930, after Ras Tafari's accession to the throne, his council contained no ras or any man of eminence except Ras Mulugeta, the Minister for War. In the written constitution of 1931 there is no mention of any council, though one clause refers to ministers who may 'present to the *Negusa Nagast* in writing their opinion of the work they have done in each of their offices' (article 48), and who 'may deliberate together if the Emperor asks their opinion upon an important matter'. An Italian writer remarks that before the war of 1936 Haile Selassié had substituted for the old council of great feudal chiefs a group of subordinate office-holders. This would be in harmony with his centralizing policy, but there is insufficient evidence that there was any such well-established feudal council to be set aside.

Since his return to the throne the constitution of 1931 has been greatly modified by an important new order of the Emperor defining the duties of the ministers and their relationships. According to this a Council of Ministers has been set up. It consists of all ministers and vice-ministers sitting under the presidency of the Emperor or, in his absence, of the Prime Minister. Its duties are to advise on matters of state, and ministers are to be held jointly responsible for decisions taken in council. The secretariat is to be under the Minister of the Pen, who has a number of other important co-ordinating duties. The council, it is said, seems to be absorbing more work and responsibility. It always meets twice a week and may meet daily in times of pressure.

The new system has hardly had time to settle down and it would be impossible to be sure whether the council, which, it must be remembered, is purely official in composition and the choice of the Emperor, has been given or has absorbed important power of initiative and decision. According to some opinions, this has already occurred. By European precedents it would seem necessary that some able and indispensable councillor should emerge to give the council coherence and leadership. There may be some hint of this in the establishment by an Order of 1943.[1] This laid down that 'all Departments and Ministers of

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[1] An Order to amend the Ministers (Definition of Powers) Order, 1943, No. 2 of 1943.

Our Government will carry out their duties under the direction of Our Prime Minister who is subordinate to Our Orders'. His main duties are defined as responsibility for the good administration of the ministries, the harmonizing of their duties and the transmission of the Emperor's orders. The first holder of the post is Makonnen Endalkachau, an Ethiopian noted for his magnificent presence, his delightful manners, and his unquestionable devotion to the Emperor.

Exactly when and how the ministers meet does not appear to be known even to those who live at the capital. It may be presumed that they have routine meetings together without the Emperor. But Europeans still complain, as they have for many years, that whenever they want to see a minister he always appears to be at the *Gibbi.*

The Emperor has, it seems, his own State or Crown Council, which lies outside the constitution. The senior member is the *Ichegé*, who attends almost all the meetings. The Rases Kassa and Seyum and the Prime Minister are other constant members, but the Emperor calls councillors as he thinks fit in relation to the subject of discussion. This council is an informal, policy-making body and as such the central focus of power under the Emperor. There can be no doubt that the Emperor himself is in fact as well as in theory the supreme source of power, and it is hardly to be expected that he allows himself to be too closely bound by all the constitutional arrangements that, upon his own initiative, have been enacted in recent years. With the help of his Minister of the Pen, Walda Giyorgis, for many years his most confidential and trusted minister, he maintains a very effective information service: nothing of importance can remain for long outside his knowledge and he is always ready, where necessary, to intervene directly at any point in the working of government.

THE MINISTRIES

Mention has just been made of the ministers who became members of the council. These ministers were a creation of this century. The Emperor Menelik, keenly interested in the new world suddenly impinging upon his country and determined to modernize his administration upon European lines, began the creation of ministries. These were set up in 1907–8 for justice, war, the interior, commerce and foreign affairs, finance and agriculture, and public works. In 1911 a ministry for posts and telegraphs was added and foreign affairs became a separate ministry. These were housed in buildings set up within the palace enclosures. The present Emperor, in his first period of rule, made the following additions to the list—industry, education and fine arts, justice, public works and communications, with departments for mines and for slavery. By 1934 most of these ministries were housed in suitable buildings outside the palace precincts, and were adequately and sometimes even impressively furnished, with the Emperor's portrait hanging in each of them.

It is not surprising that these ministries, abruptly superimposed upon the medieval organization of the country, were conducted upon lines very different from those of their European models. They were generally open only in the morning, and were frequently closed or out of action because the minister was at the palace or away upon his fief, or because he and his staff were attending one of the many festivals or public ceremonies. Salaries were very low and there were few educated men from which to draw the staffs. The Emperor found it necessary in many cases to appoint older men of standing as ministers, and they, for the most part, were very naturally unable to appreciate the purposes or conduct the business of a ministry. To compensate for this deficiency, and also to give scope and practical expression to the desire for reforms of the younger men who had received some education, the Emperor appointed some of these as directors of departments under the ministers. This sometimes tended to produce friction or even deadlock, as the Emperor did not yet feel able to give strong support to the young reformers against their conservative superiors.

There were two other limitations upon the effectiveness of the ministries, both arising inevitably from the undeveloped conditions of Ethiopia. The first, which will become more evident when the provinces are discussed, was that little machinery existed for executing outside the capital the measures drawn up within it. The tendency, therefore, was for the activities connected with social services, public works, police, finance and the rest to be concentrated mainly in and around Addis Ababa.

The second limitation, to which reference has already been made, lay in the extreme centralization under himself which the Emperor believed to be necessary. Whether the ministers and their subordinates had or had not the ability to make and execute decisions, they certainly had not the power. The ministers spent much of their time waiting about at the palace to see the Emperor, a very proper employment of their time according to the old Ethiopian court etiquette, but one which paralysed the new institutions which had been put under their charge.

In spite of considerable reform, not all the conditions described here have disappeared since the restoration. This is not surprising. While it is necessary, in order to estimate justly the conditions and possibilities of Ethiopia, to consider the weaknesses from which her first instalments of modern government suffered, it must be remembered that they were an almost inevitable accompaniment of any rapid attempt to adjust an isolated and backward country to its new environment in the modern world. The ministries were at the time a bold innovation on the part of Menelik and Haile Selassié.

Since the Emperor's return to Ethiopia the whole ministerial system has been completely re-organized and greatly extended. By the same law issued early in 1943 by which the Council of Ministers was set up, the ministers were listed and their powers and relations defined.[1]

In this law it is laid down that ministers should take an oath of allegiance to the Emperor and transact state business approved by the Emperor and the council, prepare draft laws and, except where these are specially reserved for the Emperor, make appointments to their staffs. They will submit their estimates for the budget. Each ministry will be supplied with a vice-minister. We may notice that, as in the earlier period, the Emperor still appointed the directors-general to the ministries: their duties are not defined in the law.

The following twelve ministries were set up by this order: communications and public works; education and fine arts; commerce, industry, and agriculture; the interior; foreign affairs; finance; war; the pen; justice; posts, telephones and telegraphs.

Most of these titles speak for themselves, but two of them require further definition. The duty of the Minister of the Interior is to 'supervise security' throughout the Empire, and the provincial administration and police are under his orders. The character and the great importance of this ministry will be more fully understood when we turn to a consideration of the provinces. The Ministry of the Pen represents the development of the ancient office of *Tsahafe Tezaz.* The minister's duties are to keep the Great Seal, to act as registrar of births, marriages and deaths in the royal family; to be keeper of the archives; to issue the *Gazette* and other official documents; to co-ordinate the work of the ministries; to supply the official liasion with the parliament (which will be discussed shortly), and to supervise the court established under article 54 of the constitution for the trial of administrative offences. It has already been said that this very important and pervasive function is held by the Emperor's trusted supporter, Walda Giyorgis, who was popularly known among Europeans as the '*Eminence Grise*'. There is no doubt that he is a very able man who takes care not to attract jealousy by pushing himself forward in the public eye. He has some reputation of being anti-European, but is said, when taxed with this, to have replied, 'No, I am only pro-Ethiopian.' He was recently appointed to the highly important Ministry of the Interior, which controls the provinces, as well as to that of the Pen, an onerous combination.

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[1] An Order to define the powers and duties of Our Ministers, No. 1 of 1943.

THE FOREIGN ADVISERS

Suspicion of foreigners has been remarked by many travellers as a dominant trait among Ethiopians. Yet for a country both physically isolated and also forced by Muslim neighbours into a policy of deliberate isolationism, its rulers have shown a great readiness from the days of Frumentius in the fourth century to learn from individual foreigners and to employ them in important positions. Alvarez found some of the foreigners who had reached the country some seventeen years earlier still being retained, while one of them, a Venetian artist—'a great gentleman, though a painter'—was employed as the court painter for more than forty years and deeply influenced Ethiopian art.[1] Eager use was made of Alvarez' own qualifications as a man of religion. Portuguese helpers were asked to assist against Muhammed Grañ, and remained in the service of the Emperor. Bermudez, who came in the sixteenth century, was a personage at court and was given an Ethiopian title. Bruce was made a governor; Krapf's services were solicited by King Sahla Selassié; Plowden was treated as confidential adviser by Theodore, while Bell was given the high title of *liqamakwas*, which cost him his life. Menelik employed a Swiss engineer, Monsieur Ilg, who became his principal counsellor in European affairs, and also a French engineer and a French judicial adviser.

It was, however, the Emperor Haile Selassié who, after his coronation, developed the use of foreign advisers as an important part of his system of government, appointing them to the principal ministries. They were selected, almost certainly by deliberate policy, from a number of different nations. They were chosen directly by the Emperor, generally by negotiation through their respective ministers or consuls. It is noticeable that the Emperor as far as possible avoided selecting advisers from the neighbouring colonial powers. The exception in the case of Mr. de Halpert was due to the great attention given by the British Government and by British public opinion to questions of slavery. There was thus, in spite of the long and close cultural and other connections with France, only one French adviser, while it was necessary for the Italian Government to protest in order to obtain the appointment of one Italian as a technical adviser upon wireless installation. Belgian police and military missions were appointed, and a Swedish military mission was engaged for the training of officer-cadets.

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[1] Alvarez, p. 210.

Other Europeans were employed as architects, engineers, doctors, surveyors and so on, use being made for subordinate posts of the small Russian colony established in Addis Ababa after the Bolshevik revolution.

It will be clear, from what has already been said of the defects of the immature ministries, that the foreign advisers attached to them would not find it easy to do constructive work. While some of them from time to time offered advice upon the more fundamental questions affecting the well-being of the country as a whole, they were employed mainly upon the solution of difficulties arising out of the ever-growing contacts of Ethiopia with Europe and Europeans, and upon technical problems. Outstanding among the advisers was the American Mr. Colson, whose advice was invaluable to the Emperor in diplomatic negotiations before and during the Italian invasion. His death was directly due to the strain and overwork imposed upon him during this crisis. The advisers were, however, for the most part kept strictly to their subordinate advisory position. When some of the more impatient of them protested against obstruction or delay in their departments the Emperor, though nearly always willing to give them a courteous hearing, rarely decided to support them against his ministers in carrying out the reforms they suggested. Perhaps this was because he knew that only he and a handful of modern-minded Ethiopians considered their services necessary, and that the country at large was not ready for them and did not want them.

After the liberation of the country the Emperor found himself in a wholly new position. The country had been reconquered in the main by the armies of the British Commonwealth and Empire and for a period the whole structure of the country was dependent upon the co-operation and financial support of Britain. The Agreement and Military Convention of January 1942 between the two governments recognized this situation, and in the second article provisions were made with regard to British advisers. The Emperor was stated to have requested the British Government to help him in obtaining the services of British advisers for himself and his administration and he agreed not to appoint others except after consultation with the British Government. British advisers were appointed in the following months to the ministries of the interior; finance; justice; commerce and industry; education; communications and posts and telegraphs, while there were also provincial advisers at Harar, Jimma and Dessie. In addition to the British judges and soldiers, whose position will be discussed in the relevant chapters, British assistance was also used in the police force. By the end of 1944 nearly all the British advisers had left, and by the middle of 1946 only the adviser on customs was British.

In the new agreement signed between Britain and Ethiopia in

December 1944, Britain dropped the claim, which had been reasonable in the first years after liberation by her armies, that only British advisers should be appointed. In article 3 the Ethiopian Government agreed to 'retain or appoint British or other foreign persons of experience or special qualifications to be advisers or officers of their administration as they find necessary'.

It would be a difficult and delicate task to attempt to assess the achievements of the advisers, especially as their position was bound up with the whole political and diplomatic background which lay outside their control. It is clear that they were up against many of the obstacles, if, indeed, it is fair to call them such, inherent in the Ethiopian situation. The political immaturity of the country and the incomplete comprehension of the standards the advisers wished to apply were still present, though the shocks through which the people had passed and the increased authority of the Emperor made for a greater readiness for reform and change. On the other hand nationalist suspicions were in some ways stronger and were deepened by the dominant and exclusive position that Britain had for the moment, by the circumstances of the war, obtained in the country. The Emperor and his ministers were determined that the advisers should never encroach beyond their advisory position, nor even appear to do so, and the single occasion when the advisers presented the Emperor with joint advice upon what seemed a very urgent matter deepened the ready suspicions of the Ethiopian authorities. It should, however, be recorded here that the British Government took no advantage of its military and financial position in 1942 to give the word advice the meaning it had acquired in the former Egyptian and other geographical contexts. On the contrary, the British Government and Legation stood apart from the advisers who were, in fact as well as in form, no more than the Emperor's employees.

The role of adviser in Ethiopia is indeed one that demands very special gifts, especially of character. The adviser must be prepared to wait patiently until his advice is asked, and to wait again with the same patience while his minister decides whether or not to act upon his advice. He cannot count upon obtaining the information necessary in order to give sound advice nor upon facilities to study the country outside the capital. (Provincial advisers were not allowed to go outside the provincial capitals.) The adviser must expect neither credit nor gratitude but must serve with the utmost selflessness. Unless to patience and self-effacement he can add faith in the people he is helping and even affection for them, he is unlikely to win their confidence or to find his own task congenial or even tolerable. Most difficult of all in the world of to-day, he must accept without reservations the unusual situation in which the man of less civilization and experience is master of the man who has more, and he must be content to work in an atmosphere that is often heavily charged with misunderstanding and suspicion.

Clearly all these qualities and attitudes are not easy to develop, especially among men trained, as some of the advisers were, in the Colonial or other imperial Services. It is therefore less surprising that the system of British advisers was not a resounding and enduring success than that most of them were able to achieve through their ministries, valuable work and important reforms and so far to win the confidence of the Ethiopians that the Emperor endeavoured to retain their services and would still be ready, it is understood, to employ one or two other British advisers if this country could supply the right men. As the British advisers left there was a tendency to appoint Americans to high advisory and other posts. Americans were made advisers upon foreign affairs, education, and finance and communications; others went to the government of the State Bank and the directorship of medical services. For other services the Emperor turned again to some of the minor powers. Among these Sweden, which before the Italian occupation had supplied a number of very helpful assistants to the Emperor, renewed her contribution in 1945. Still more recently the Emperor has turned to Russia, and it has been reported that some plane-loads of Russian experts, including doctors, have arrived in the country. Expert British help is still represented in the police, the judiciary, the military, and in the education service, while Brigadier Sandford assists with the administration of Addis Ababa. The tendency will probably be to dispense increasingly with men of the status of advisers and to make use of foreigners mainly in executive, and especially technical, posts under the ministers.

THE LEGISLATURE

In 1931 the Emperor drew up and gave to his people, as part of the reforming and modernizing policy to which he was able to give full rein after his coronation, a written constitution.[1] This was confirmed upon his restoration in 1941. The most important and novel part of this constitution was its establishment of a parliament of two houses.

In first announcing this innovation the Emperor was extremely frank. 'I wish my people to learn', he said, 'the idea of representation that they may one day rise to take their part in the government of the country. That time is as yet, I know, far off.' In a highly laudatory speech, the then Minister of Finance asserted that the constitution was not a translation made of one of the civilized countries' laws; it was a unique gift.

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[1] This is given in full in Appendix B.

Ethiopia, he said, exaggerating to the extent of a millennium, had been 'known as a nation for over 3,000 years, and all the while she has been waiting patiently with arms stretched out to heaven for some great gift'. This the Emperor had now given her.

The structure of parliament is briefly defined in the constitution which 'unasked and of Our own free will' the Emperor decreed. The Senate, as defined in article 31, was to consist of members appointed by the Emperor from among the Nobility (*Mekuanent*) 'who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers'. The Senate at first consisted of twenty-eight members and among these only three rases, Hailu, Desta and Seyum, were named, with a few of the more important of the Emperor's closest assistants. The deputies, 'until the people are in a position to elect them themselves' were to be nominated by the nobility and the local chiefs. Rather surprisingly the deputies were at first fewer in numbers than the Senators.

The functions of the parliament are almost wholly covered by article 34. 'No law may be put into force without having been discussed by the Chambers and having obtained the confirmation of the Emperor.' It is, indeed, quite clear and not surprising that at this preliminary stage the chambers were given no other right than to discuss what the Emperor put before them, though by article 35 deputies could ask his permission to deliberate on subjects suggested by themselves. In the clause giving the Emperor power to issue 'decrees taking the place of laws', when the chambers are not sitting, it is stated that these shall be abrogated if the chambers do not approve them at their next sitting. The Emperor convenes and dissolves the chambers and draws up their procedure. Ministers may not attend without his permission. The whole reserve of absolute power lies, as we have seen above, with the Emperor.

It might have been expected that so rudimentary and relatively powerless a legislature would do little more than receive and diffuse the Emperor's laws and instructions. It is difficult to judge the efficacy of the institution during the first period of the reign. Somewhat impressive buildings, decorated with frescoes of Ethiopian history, were opened in 1934 for the parliament, but its proceedings were surrounded with a good deal of secrecy. At its first session, though opinion was strongly against the introduction of a nickel coinage, the Emperor decided upon the passing of the decree. At the 1934 session a dozen laws, some of them upon very important subjects, were passed. It appears that it met irregularly and lapsed before the Italian invasion.[1]

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[1] Gardiner, A. L., 'La juridiction concernant les étrangers en Ethiopie', *Revue Générale de Droit International Public*, Paris, vol. 44, pp. 90 ff.

The Emperor continued to issue his own decrees as he did before the inauguration of parliament, and it has not appeared to be of great importance whether the nominated chambers went through the form of confirming them or not. One traveller, admittedly in a somewhat impressionistic book, reported that he was present at a meeting of the parliament at which, though it was well attended by notables and crowds from Addis Ababa and was the occasion for the Emperor to announce laws of the greatest importance dealing with education and other subjects, the deputies' seats were empty except for one member. He was the representative of Addis Ababa and the only one able to answer in time a summons which had been issued the same day.[1]

PARLIAMENT SINCE THE RESTORATION

Upon his restoration the Emperor re-established the constitution of 1931 and declared, in opening parliament on the 2nd of November 1942, 'Although six years have elapsed since We opened the last session of Parliament, We regard this session as the continuation of the last.' He urged upon the deputies the importance of uniting and the realization that civic rights went with obligations to the state. God had inspired him to 'establish you as links with Our people, so as to allow you to make Us acquainted with questions in which you are interested and to collaborate in the work of Government'.[2]

In a reply to an address by the British minister upon the same day, the Emperor revealed some of the conceptions in his mind with regard to parliament. 'We have long realized what incalculable benefits have been brought to your country', he said, 'by your system of Government. And we are conscious that the present turmoils in Europe have come about because the people under Axis Powers have never been politically free. We are anxious that we should draw from Our Parliament, as you have done from yours, contentment and security for Our people in times of peace, and strength, unity and determination in time of war.'[3]

If the Ethiopian people were not ready for electoral rights before their conquest it was hardly likely that they would learn much about democracy from their Italian rulers. In his speech at the re-opening of parliament the Emperor told the deputies that 'when Our people have obtained sufficient experience the time will be ripe for them to choose their own representatives'. In the meantime, since article 32 of the constitution is very brief, a proclamation to define the system was issued on the 9th of March 1941. It laid down what was, in effect, a form of indirect election. Each of the twelve provinces was divided into twenty electoral districts. All persons paying land-tax and all notables had the right to vote. The twenty electors were to come together to the capital of the province and there, in the presence of the governor, an ecclesiastical dignitary, a representative of the Ministry of the Interior and a sworn official recorder, they were to elect by secret ballot five of their number to be deputies. Those elected must be over twenty-one years of age, must be men versed in the public affairs of their regions and acceptable to the people, and of known loyalty and patriotism. It is not easy to be certain that at this early stage in the restoration of the country, and especially in outlying provinces, these instructions were actually carried out. It has so far proved impossible to obtain any European evidence throwing light upon the holding of elections.

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[1] Farago, L., *Abyssinia on the Eve*, 1935, p. 104.

[2] Abyssinia Association, *op. cit.*, pp. 4 and 7.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

The Senate, appointed, as has been explained, by the Emperor, numbers some thirty as compared with the sixty who now sit in the Chamber of Deputies. It is provided that the legislature should sit from October to March and from June to August. The power of dissolution rests with the Emperor.

The output of legislation since the re-opening of parliament has been very heavy. It is not always easy, however, from the form in which the laws are promulgated to judge their exact constitutional genesis. Thus, in spite of article 34, the majority of laws were issued in the first years of the restoration as royal proclamations. Following the number and title of the law comes the formula:

'Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah,
Haile Selassié I
Elect of God, Emperor of Ethiopia.
We proclaim as follows:'.

At the end the proclamation is signed by the Minister of the Pen, Walda Giyorgis, and this is true of all laws up to the latest date. A brief statement of reasons is sometimes given between the title and the words of proclamation. In the first of the proclamations issued after that establishing the *Gazette*, an enactment dealing with justice, the formula runs:

'On the advice of our Council of Ministers and on the recommendation of our Minister of Justice,

'We proclaim as follows:'.

This formula is, however, dropped and is only occasionally used again, sometimes it would seem for very important proclamations.

The first proclamation issued with the authority of parliament is No. 34 of 1943 issued on the 1st of March and using the formula:

'In accordance with Article 34 of Our Constitution, we approve the resolutions of Our Senate and the Chamber of Deputies and We accordingly proclaim as follows:'.

This formula is continued until the end of February 1944 when the sole authority of the Emperor is again used, and this continues until the 1st of November 1944 when the parliamentary form begins again. It seems that these imperial proclamations are issued when parliament is not sitting. Presumably all the proclamations issued by the Emperor when parliament is not in session are automatically confirmed; there is no reference in the *Gazette* to this, nor any information about this process of confirmation. The Emperor, moreover, has three other ways in which he can legislate without parliament, and in these categories it appears that no parliamentary sanction is needed. Several very important laws deciding constitutional matters of the highest importance have been issued under the name of decree. Under article 11 of the constitution which empowers the Emperor to 'lay down the organization and the regulations of all administrative departments and to appoint and dismiss all civil and military officers', Decree No. 1 of 1942, for example, laid down the whole system of provincial administration, while No. 1 of 1943 established the ministries and defined their powers. A very few other decrees have been issued, including those granting honours and colours in the army. We may note that there seems to be some ambiguity about decrees and orders, since the law regarding ministries is entitled an order but referred to in a later decree as the first decree.

We may note that, following the heavy output of legislation between 1942 and 1944, the natural tendency has been towards the issue of regulations, called general or legal notices under the laws. These have appeared in very large number and many of them provide for matters of great importance. There is no provision in the constitution that these should be subject to parliamentary sanction.

Decree No. 2 of 1942 suggests a third category of laws and raises another interesting constitutional question, that of the position of the church, which is nowhere defined in the constitution. The formula runs:

'Whereas We have in mind Article XI of our Constitution' (i.e. that quoted just above),

'And whereas We have noted and approved the proposals which the Ecclesiastical Council has considered and put forward concerning the administration of the Church,

'We hereby promulgate the attached Regulations concerning the administration of the Church.'

The regulations, which will be described in the chapter on the church, cover such important matters as church lands, fiefs, revenues, appointments and legal jurisdiction.[1] The formula suggests that the Ecclesiastical Council does in fact play the part of a third estate of the realm.

It may be that too elaborate an attention to the forms of legislation is a little pedantic at the very early and experimental stage of constitutional re-organization in Ethiopia. It is largely because the relationship between the Emperor and parliament is shrouded in so much obscurity that we have to turn to these forms for such light as they can provide. The powers of parliament remain as in the 1931 constitution, but it is not very easy to say whether this body gained greatly in confidence and capacity. Some observers of Ethiopian affairs declare their belief that parliament has been much more of a reality than could have been expected in a body representative of the main interest of the country, the land-owners; it showed vigour, especially in opposition to an increase in the land-tax. Upon another occasion since the restoration the Chamber of Deputies is said to have thrown out a money bill because the government was acting against article 55 of the constitution in not having submitted a budget.[2] It is also said that members of parliament have been more liable to fall foul of the ministers than to offend by their outspokenness the Emperor, who has shown a tendency to encourage this infant parliament of his own creation. But all this is little more than a rumour and it is countered by others which state that parliament merely listens to the statements of the ministers and registers their laws. It is certainly used as a *durbar* upon important occasions. Thus, when the Emperor celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of his coronation on the 2nd of October 1945, the procession he headed led to the parliament buildings where, before a joint session of both houses, 'with the Ministers, the Abuna, *Ichegé* and hosts of Ethiopian Notables and Dignitaries' he made a speech which was relayed by wireless to the crowds outside.[3] Ordinary proceedings are not open to the public; no Europeans attend parliament; there appear to be no records available to the public and its affairs are veiled in a good deal of mystery. Until more publicity is allowed, nothing certain can be known. As far as any conclusion is possible for those who can have no access behind the curtains of the council chambers, where the balance of power is decided, the Emperor, while making of his parliament something beyond a mere façade, feels it necessary to keep all effective control in his own hands, or in those of ministers dependent upon himself. This is a constitutional situation which it would not be difficult to justify at this stage of Ethiopian development.

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[1] See below, pp. 130–2.

[2] Sandford, C., *Ethiopia Under Hailé Selassié*, 1946, p. 126.

[3] *Ethiopian Herald*, 5 November 1945.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CHURCH

GENERAL

It is by no mere convenience of arrangement that a chapter upon the Ethiopian Church follows upon a survey of the monarchy and its auxiliary institutions at the centre. This will be very clear in this chapter in spite of its limited treatment of this important subject. It is not possible to give here—though such a study is much wanted—a general description of the Ethiopian church, least of all of its doctrines and practices, but only a summary sufficient to allow of its being seen in relationship with the government of the country.

This restriction is, perhaps, fortunate since to the traveller and the student the religion of an alien people is generally the most obscure part of their society. In Ethiopia the subject is still further clouded because, in spite of this handicap, travellers from Christendom have felt especially qualified to pass judgement upon those who professed the same religion, and this isolated church, by its combination of likeness and unlikeness to their own, has puzzled and, in some cases it might almost be said, exasperated them. Others, especially in the most modern times, have, by reason of their indifference towards religious matters, failed to understand this governing element in Ethiopian society. In this sphere even more than in others, some of the earlier travellers who learned the language and spent many years in the country seem to have got upon closer terms with the Ethiopians and to have shown more tolerance and understanding than many later writers. Nor are their views irrelevant to the present situation as the church has been the most conservative institution in a conservative society, and travellers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries remark almost exactly the same phenomena as those of the nineteenth and twentieth. It must be remembered, however, that some of the earliest and best authorities upon Ethiopia and those most interested in church matters, have been members of a church which regarded that of Ethiopia as apostate, and which developed a deadly struggle with it. Though many of these writers preserved a most creditable degree of objectivity in treating of this aspect of Ethiopian life and history, their very natural partisanship appears from time to time.

The historical origin of Ethiopian Christianity in the fourth century, its link with the Coptic Church of Egypt, and its monophysite doctrine have already been outlined. Ethiopia had one tenuous link with a church which, after the seventh century, was itself subject to Muslim rule—though this was generally tolerant—and which was at times almost as isolated and stagnant as its daughter. Apart from this one contact, Ethiopian Christianity for some thousand years followed a lonely road. It was beset for almost the whole of these centuries by pagan and Muslim enemies, who not only cut the church off from the comfort and inspiration of other Christian communities, but also forced her into an almost fantastically defensive and conservative attitude.

The circumstances of the breach with the Greco-Latin Church, followed by the attempts of the Melkite (or 'imperial') Church to reassert its authority, left the Egyptian Copts with a deep hostility towards their former parent. According to one view the eastern churches had found no more than an occasion for their secession in the monophysite dispute; the cause lay in the deep difference of outlook between two regions and cultures. The practical, logical administrative attitude of the Latin mind, the philosophical and cosmic subtleties of the Greek were alike uncongenial to Egyptians, Syrians and Armenians who also chafed against the dominance of a system of church government which appeared to them to be far too much an extension into religious life of the imperial bureaucracy. If these deep cultural differences were largely the cause of the split of the year 450, how much wider the gulf was to grow in the following 1,500 years, during most of which the eastern churches, except that of Ethiopia, were under Muslim power or influence and utterly removed from the profound and energetic developments of European religion and philosophy! It is this which leads one writer to characterize Coptic and Syrian Christianity as having 'remained as static as anything on earth can remain static',[1] and to conclude sadly that 'Monophysite Christendom simply cannot understand our Christendom nor can our Christendom understand it'.[2] This strong view from one qualified to express it should induce a proper humility in an unlearned laic such as the writer, in approaching this subject. It is a hard saying to accept, and yet to enter the ancient Coptic monasteries and churches in Egypt is to have a sudden, intuitive experience, a strange sense at once of the bond of common religion and the division between two worlds of the mind.

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[1] Matthew, *op. cit.*, p. xxvi.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. xxvii. Both these two quotations are from the introduction by Canon J. A. Douglas.

The year 1520, as we have seen, brought the first dynamic contact with the main Christian world since the visit of Frumentius. The arrival of Portuguese Christians in the sixteenth century was welcomed at first with an incredulous and touching joy, but the later attempts at conversion to Rome, in spite of some royal support, were ultimately rejected, notwithstanding the ability of the Jesuit missionaries and the great military services of the Portuguese. The leanings of Lij Yasu in another direction, that of Islam, led to his deposition. Indeed, in the centuries of long isolation and warfare, religion had become so fused with what may, with reservations, be called Ethiopian nationalism that these two sentiments had become almost one. In the north the Muslim inhabitants use the word Amhara to mean Christian, and Coulbeaux, who was, between 1870 and 1900, a lazarist missionary in Ethiopia, wrote, 'Ils sont chrétiens comme ils sont abyssins.'[1]

It follows from what has been said of the lack of any reliable figures for Ethiopia's population that those for the religions of the country can only be rough estimates. Zoli, who was governor of Eritrea and had studied Ethiopian conditions, takes the total population as 6,000,000 and offers the following figures:[2]

Ethiopian church	2,625,000
Muslims	2,250,000
Pagans	1,100,000
Catholics	11,000
Others	14,000

This chapter will be concerned with the first category, the members of the Ethiopian Church, which is mainly confined to the Amharic and Tigrinya-speaking people and to those groups of Galla which have been in long and close contact with them. The church will first be considered as it was before the Italian invasion, although much of what will be said of its internal conditions would be applicable equally to the present day.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

Constitutionally, church and state were one. The Emperor was the unchallenged head of the church, and the fortunes of the Solomonian dynasty were interwoven by historical associations and mutual interests with those of the church. Emperor and church, working together as senior and junior partners, provided the unifying elements which continually countered the centrifugal forces of geography, tribalism and aristocracy. Coulbeaux, a learned, though at times, as a Roman Catholic, a somewhat unsympathetic, observer of the native religion, speaks of the relationship of church and state as that of 'a single moral being, an amphibious personality', which communicated movement to the national life as the motor does to a machine. If the relationship is to be likened to a marriage, then the role of the church was the complaisant and smiling deference of the wife.[1] It might be added, however, carrying this metaphor further, that most of the Emperors were devoted husbands; the records are filled with evidences of their piety and their intense interest in theology. It was said that the only place in Ethiopia where the church was more powerful than the state was in Aksum, with its many churches and clergy and the importance of its large sanctuary.[2]

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[1] Coulbeaux, vol. 1, p. 71, note.

[2] Zoli, C., *Cronache Etiopiche*, Rome, 1930, p. 14.

The church in the earliest days must have been very effective as a unifying influence because, as with the Roman Church of the English heptarchy, its influence overrode the frontiers of petty kings and chiefs. It had for most of its long life one full bishop only, the Coptic Egyptian appointed from the monastery of Saint Anthony by the Patriarch of Alexandria and generally known as Abuna ('our father'). He was appointed at the request of the Emperor, who had to pay a large fee to the Muslim government of Egypt for the privilege. The Egyptian Church had a strongly centralized form of government, according to which Ethiopia was a single bishopric. Though up to seven Ethiopian suffragan bishops might be consecrated by the Alexandrian Canons, twelve were required to consecrate a metropolitan, and a request from Ethiopia in 1140 for an increase of bishops was refused. It seems that, in fact, the Abuna was generally the only bishop and that he had no power to create others. This rule, which was established on the authority of a Coptic forgery as a decree of the Council of Nicaea, was believed to have been confirmed as part of the agreement in 1268 between Takla Haimanot, the saintly head of the monastery of Debra Libanos, and the representative of the Solomonian line which he had helped to restore.[3]

Considering the great difficulties of communication between Ethiopia and Alexandria, it is astonishing how seldom the continuity of this appointment was broken. The head of the Ethiopian Church was thus not only, as a rule, the sole member of his rank, but he also came in as a foreigner, knowing nothing of the customs and languages of his flock, and in most instances was in a position of some detachment from his closest Ethiopian colleagues.[1] The last Abuna appointed before the Italian invasion could talk to his Ethiopian assistants and clergy only through an interpreter.[2] Moreover, as the Egyptian Church was at most times not very rich in higher personnel, and as a lifelong exile in a distant and backward country was unlikely to attract its more eminent sons, the Abunas were seldom qualified to play the important role assumed by some of the great ecclesiastics of medieval Europe, who had all the formidable authority of Rome and the Papacy behind them.[3] In spite of the importance of the church in national life, few names of its Abunas stand out in Ethiopian history. The very weakness of the mother church and its representative may have been a negative virtue to the Ethiopians, reinforcing their attachment to a bond at once so historic and so harmless.

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[1] Coulbeaux, vol. 1, p. 49.

[2] Wylde, pp. 147 and 156–7.

[3] The assertion that the canon was forged has recently been made—apparently for the first time by the Ethiopian authorities—in a statement in the official newspaper, *Herald*, 1 July 1946.

The first historical records, indeed, show the Abuna as deeply subordinate to the Emperor. As early as the tenth century we hear of an Abuna who was kept a close prisoner by the Emperor and forced to act simply as his tool.[4] Bruce, who resided in Ethiopia at a time of great weakness in the royal power, describes an incident in which an important ecclesiastic—the third in the hierarchy—was tried for his part in a rebellion during which he had persuaded the Abuna to excommunicate the king. 'The Abuna', the king told the prisoner, 'is a slave of the Turks, and has no king; you are born under a monarchy; why did you, who are his inferior in office, take upon you to advise him at all . . . and abuse his ignorance in these matters?' The accused was condemned and hanged and Bruce adds that he has told the story to show 'that all ecclesiastical persons are subject to the secular power in Abyssinia as much as they are in Britain or in any European Protestant state whatsoever'.[5] Plowden found that, though the Abuna 'received a reverence almost amounting to worship', he had been exiled by Ras Ali to Aduwa.[6] The Emperor Theodore spoke of his Abuna as 'a mere slave, whom he had purchased for money'.[7] Rassam reports that this Abuna, a man of liberal views and saintly life, had been stripped of all his resources by the Emperor and dared not even visit the British captives. This was because he had dared to rebuke Theodore's treachery and cruelty.[1] Examples can be found in Ethiopian history of the deposition, imprisonment, exile and even the execution of Abunas by the Emperors.

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[1] Bruce, vol. 3, p. 317.

[2] O'Leary, *op. cit.*, p. 22. See this writer especially for a brief summary of the early history of relationship between Alexandria and Ethiopia.

[3] If the limitation of choice to the monks of Saint Anthony's monastery was always strictly observed, the range of selection must have been very narrow.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 45–6. [5] Bruce, vol. 4, pp. 73–7. [6] Hotten, p. 162.

[7] Rassam, H., *Narrative of the British Mission to Theodore*, 1869, vol. 1, p. 249.

The Abuna was, however, normally treated with every outward sign of respect. He sat in what has been called his 'solemn insignificance' upon the Emperor's right hand at all public occasions. He alone could crown an Emperor, though immediately afterwards he must make his submission and that of his church. He alone could ordain priests and deacons and bless the altar stones for the churches. He issued, nearly always upon the Emperor's instructions and for political purposes, blessings or excommunications; he could liberate people from their oaths. When an action by an Abuna seemed to be of decisive importance, this was generally when he was merely the agent of some other powerful force. In the early seventeenth century, for example, an Abuna released an army from its allegiance to a king who was favouring a Catholic mission; it disbanded itself and the king was defeated and killed. Theodore in 1854 intercepted the Abuna on his way to crown the Ras of Tigré as King of Kings and induced him to divert the honour to himself and to persuade the clergy that Theodore and not his rival was the chosen of the Lord. In 1916, when Lij Yasu finally alienated the Shoan leaders, they requested the Abuna to release them from their oath of allegiance to this patron of Islam and to call upon the church to support the Empress Zawditu and Ras Tafari. At moments of crisis, as in 1909 and 1911 just before Menelik's death, appeal might be made to the Abuna as a peacemaker or political umpire. It is interesting to note that the Abuna was the first, after the Emperor and his son, to sign the constitution of 1931. In matters of doctrine the Abuna has not, apparently, much authority, and before 1935 the Emperor himself issued decrees dealing with church matters in his own name. Finally, the Abuna was not supposed to leave the country without the permission of the Emperor; the visit of the Abuna Matthew to Jerusalem and to the Russian court in 1902 was probably unique.[2]

Has the Ethiopian Church lost or gained from its association through the Abuna with the church of Alexandria? It is difficult to say. That church, except at rare intervals, had little to give her daughter. The extreme subjection of the latter might have been justified in the earliest days, but very soon the daughter church became much greater in numbers and geographical extent than the mother, and, as we shall see, the limitation upon the number of bishops was a serious handicap in such an immense country, especially as there were interruptions in the continuity of the Abuna's office. 'Au lieu d'être une mère', asks Coulbeaux with some justice, 'l'église d'Alexandrie n'est elle pas, pour l'Ethiopie, une tyrannique marâtre?'[1] On the other hand, it may be argued that, in the extreme isolation of Ethiopian Christianity, almost any outside influence was likely to do more good than harm. The spiritual vitality of the Egyptian Church very naturally showed fluctuations during a partnership of so many centuries, though even in the seventh century we hear of a reforming Patriarch whose influence reached Ethiopia.[2] The Patriarchs of Alexandria have, however, for a long period shown little initiative in strengthening the bonds. The visit of one of them to Ethiopia in 1930 was, as far as we know, only the second of its kind. An attempt to broaden the connection and to educate the clergy was made in 1930, when sixty young men were sent to Egypt to be educated under the control of the Patriarch. It is said that the experiment was not a great success and linguistic difficulties may have contributed to this result. The link with the Coptic Church was to some very slight extent a link with Muslim Egypt and with Arabic thought and literature in so far as this last was assimilated by the Egyptian monks and clergy. The Egyptian Government upon its side regarded the connection with Ethiopia as having some political value. It may be remarked here that the Muslim governments of Egypt have on the whole maintained throughout the centuries a very tolerant attitude towards this Christian connection, from which they derived considerable financial and some political profit.

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[1] *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 193–6.

[2] Castro, L. de, *Nella terra dei Negus*, Milan, 1915, p. 287. Also Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 501, note 3.

The appointment of a foreigner as head of their church was bound to be questioned as soon as the Ethiopians absorbed into their nationalism the ideas of exclusiveness and prestige which mark that sentiment in the modern world. That their importation of the Abuna with its expense and inconvenience had lasted so long was perhaps partly due to the realization of the ruling dynasty that it favoured its absolutism. It was also due to the respect felt by Ethiopians for ancient traditions and documents. The two sentiments would reinforce each other; there was nothing to fear and much to venerate in the persecuted and minority church of Egypt. A village priest was once heard to express horror at the idea of an Ethiopian Abuna on the grounds that Ham's mockery of his father's drunkenness made it impossible for any descendant of his to be elevated to such a rank. Yet in 1927 a leading Ethiopian of modern outlook complained that his people had to pay heavily for the privilege of importing Abunas, not one of whom since Frumentius—

[1] Coulbeaux, vol. 1, p. 161.

[2] O'Leary, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

the founder of the church in Ethiopia—had, he said, done any good to the country.

The whole question became acute in 1926 when the long-lived Abuna Matthew died. An attempt was made to persuade the Patriarch to give the new Abuna, Cyril, power to consecrate other bishops. He refused, but as a compromise himself consecrated four Ethiopian monks as suffragan bishops on the express condition that these bishops could not themselves consecrate either a new Abuna or new bishops, and that they remained in submission to him. There was some perturbation in Egypt lest the issue should come to a head but both Ras Tafari and Ras Kassa gave their support at this time to the conservative side, and the crisis passed. In 1930 when the Patriarch visited Ethiopia he consecrated a fifth Ethiopian bishop.

Second to the Abuna comes the *Ichegé*, or 'assistant at the Imperial Throne'. His post is said to originate in the agreement by which Takla Haimanot reserved for his successors, the strong priors of the monastery of Debra Libanos, the control of the temporal affairs of the church, and the appointment is generally made from that monastery. Alvarez describes him as 'the greatest prelate there is in these kingdoms, exclusive of the Abima Marcos, who is over all',[1] while Bruce remarked that in troublesome times he was of much greater consequence than the Abuna,[2] and that he was appointed by the king; this description still held good in 1935. His position was comparable with that of a Vicar-General. As an Ethiopian and head, under the Emperor, of all the secular affairs of the church, he wielded great power and was in a very strong position with regard to the Abuna. It is possible that the separation of spiritual and temporal authority, and the placing of the latter in the strong hands of a native ecclesiastic, have not been for the spiritual health of the church; they have certainly strengthened the position of the Emperors, who have often had to arbitrate between the spiritual and the administrative heads of the church.

The legend runs that Takla Haimanot's bargain in the thirteenth century with the new king ensured that one third of the country should be given in perpetuity to the prior and his successors for the maintenance of his office and the support of the churches and clergy. Certainly the church's lands and endowments, though they can hardly rise to these proportions, were immense. As in England, they belonged not to the church corporatively but to individual churches and monasteries. Some until very lately held their lands on a tenure comparable to the medieval 'liberties' with large rights of jurisdiction. The *Ichegé* carried out his administration through numerous officials who held the title of *Alaqa*

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[1] Alvarez, p. 161.

[2] Bruce, vol. 3, p. 319.

(head). They were generally laymen and their functions were mainly secular. These included the care of churches, their land and property, discipline and the settlement of disputes among the clergy. Officials of considerable importance, they appeared to hold equal rank, all being directly responsible to the *Ichegé*. This prelate had special responsibilities for the important orders of monks which again strengthened his position as against the Abuna.[1] Another important grade in the ecclesiastical hierarchy was formed by those holding the office of *liqekahenat*, or head of all the clergy of a province. Nomination to this post was in the hands of the Emperor.[2]

THE CLERGY

Travellers of all periods have exclaimed at the great number of the Ethiopian clergy. They wear white turbans and carry crosses, and at religious functions they dress in elaborate and often highly coloured robes. Guesses, some running into a quarter of the Christian population, have been made. This is certainly excessive. An experienced contemporary observer suggests that one male in five is in orders.[3] But there can be no reliable reckoning on which to base an estimate. That the figure must be high in the Amhara country is obvious from the great number of churches. It was said in the eighteenth century that in no country in the world were there so many churches. In spite of the mountains one could seldom see less than five or six, and often five times as many.[4] There are said to be between 17,000 and 18,000 churches and monasteries in the country to-day. It must be remembered that the celebration of the Eucharist requires at least two priests and three deacons, while three priests and four deacons are more usual. Some churches had 100 clergy attached to them; one had 500, and another 300. Even in Muslim Harar, the Church of Saint Michael had an establishment of twenty-four priests and 160 deacons and *debteras* or choristers. Nor was the number of churches a fixed inheritance from earlier ages; it was constantly increasing. Kings and great ones have always sought to atone for their sins and to commemorate their names by building churches quite irrespectively of pastoral needs. Sometimes land was taken from its peasant holders to endow the church. Until his fall in 1932 Ras Hailu, though no saintly figure, was famous for the number of churches he built in Gojjam. The latest erection by the Emperor is the new Church of Selassié (the Trinity) which he began before the Italian invasion and finished since his return as the resting-place of his daughter Tsahai and of the unknown Ethiopian warrior. Before the Italian invasion new churches could be seen going up in most parts of the country. Wherever Amhara garrisons went into the conquered territories, churches and priests at once appeared, so that even along the desolate Boran frontier with Kenya provision was made for each remote garrison.

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[1] Almagia, R., 'L'Africa Orientale', *Reale Societa Geografica Italiana*, Bologna, 1936, Part III, pp. 307 ff. See also Zoli, *op. cit.*, chapter 3.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 308. Also Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 1, pp. 10 and 66.

[3] Sandford, p. 78.

[4] Bruce, vol. 3, p. 313.

The churches for the most part are made of mud and thatch on the pattern of the people's huts and are generally round like them, except in the north where houses and churches tend to be of stone and to have stone bells for calling worshippers. The few larger stone churches are generally the remnants of earlier days. A few of these may have been built or re-built in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries by the Portuguese and by workmen trained by them. Churches are generally set upon high places with trees, which are kept sacred from the woodcutter, close beside them. They are generally divided into three parts, the inner sanctuary surrounded by an inner and outer ambulatory. The sanctuary walls are often painted—daubed, as Bruce said—with highly coloured frescoes. It has been said that the Ethiopian tradition of painting was derived primarily from the work of the Italian Brancaleone, whom Alvarez found in the country. But a study of Greco-Roman portraits, and of the early Coptic painting that appears to have been derived from them, suggests an older and more stereotyped tradition reaching Ethiopia from Alexandria; this theory seems to be confirmed by the few illustrated missals dating from before the Muslim ravages of the sixteenth century. Within the sanctuary, the priests keep the *tabot* or sacred altar stone, the most consecrated part of the church. Formerly of stone, it is now made of hard wood and is about twelve inches square: it is always hidden in rich coverings from the eyes of the layman, but it may be carried out by the priests upon festivals or with the armies. The western European visitor would miss any seating accommodation, except in the large new churches, and also the organ, the dirge-like chanting being accompanied by the drum and sistrum.

There are two main grades of office among the regular clergy. The first is the priesthood. As is the rule in the eastern churches, priests must be married before ordination or they must be monks. As land was often set aside for each living, there was every inducement for a priest to train his sons to succeed him. As there was also a tendency for priests to marry into families of the same profession, the priesthood is almost a hereditary caste, a situation which fits into the Hebraic conception of a Levitical fraternity. Little preparation was required for the office, and sons growing up under their father's care could easily absorb, to the low standard required, a knowledge of clerical routine. In theory the candidate was supposed to know how to read, though not necessarily to understand, Ge'ez, the ancient language in which he must recite the church services. Of the minimum of three priests to each church, one was in general charge, and all were maintained from the land attached to the church, or from revenue from it managed by the *Alaqas*, and also from the many fees paid by the parishioners for their services. Land might be attached to individual priests. The priests were held to be in charge of the spiritual welfare of their congregations and they were exempt from fighting, though they might be expected to accompany the armies.

Most travellers use extremely depreciatory words of the clergy, such as 'ignorant', 'besotted', 'lazy' and 'degraded'. Through the centuries, beginning even with the tolerant Alvarez, the criticism of the clergy has been almost unbroken. Ludolphus recorded that 'both the Patriarch and his Clergy are a poor sort of contemptible and rustic People and void of all common endowments'.[1] 'Twelve thousand clerical drones . . . fatten in idleness on the labour of the working classes', declared Harris.[2] Plowden speaks of 'the almost daily spectacle of their drunkenness, excesses, and immorality'.[3] Coulbeaux has equally hard things to say at greater length.[4] Rey writes that they are ignorant and illiterate parasites.[5] Baum speaks of the country as 'woefully priest-ridden'.[6] Even Mrs. Sandford, latest and most sympathetic of commentators, stigmatizes the priesthood as 'ignorant, primitive and superstitious'.[7]

It may be questioned whether the more extreme of these judgements were founded upon wide or sympathetic understanding of Ethiopian society. Yet the priesthood must have suffered from having been so long isolated from external religious standards or ideas, from its multiplication beyond all reasonable needs and its development into something resembling a caste. Though the priests seem to have preserved the affection and respect of their flocks, and played an important part in village life, some of the educated Ethiopians even before the Italian invasion joined the Europeans in their criticism of the clergy. Many Ethiopian priests achieved the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (where the Ethiopian church held certain religious properties and rights), whenever the intervening Muslim rulers did not make this impossible. This appears to have done little to elevate the knowledge and character of the clergy as a whole, though Wylde testifies to its influence upon those who did go.[1]

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[1] Ludolphus, p. 306.

[2] Harris, W. C., *The Highlands of Aethiopia*, 1844, vol. 3, p. 131.

[3] Hotten, p. 161.

[4] Coulbeaux, vol. 1, pp. 55–7.

[5] Rey, C. F., *Unconquered Abyssinia*, 1923, p. 127.

[6] Baum, J. E., *Savage Abyssinia*, 1928, p. 63.

[7] Sandford, p. 78.

One probable cause of the low standard of the clergy lay in the method by which priests and deacons were ordained wholesale by the Abuna without either preparation or examination. Alvarez, writing about 1530, and later observers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have described this ceremony in much the same terms. Alvarez watched the Abuna ordaining thousands of priests a day and also children in arms as deacons. To his protest the Abuna replied that as he was very old, and since there might be an interregnum before his successor could be brought from Egypt, provision must be made in advance.[2] Bruce once saw 'all the army of Begemder made deacons, just returned from shedding the blood of 10,000 men, thus drawn up in Aylo Meidan, and the Abuna standing at the church of Saint Raphael, about a quarter of a mile distant from them. With these were mingled about 1,000 women who, consequently, having part of the same blast and brandishment of the cross, were as good deacons as the rest.'[3] Since women were ineligible for the office, Bruce's last sentence misses the mark. The restriction of the power of ordination to one old man in a country with such difficult communications is certainly an explanation, if not a justification, of this abuse. Krapf was told how the difficulty had been met upon one occasion by sending the ordaining breath of the Abuna to a distant part in a leather bag.[4] One of the main reasons for requesting the consecration of additional bishops was that this would allow of reforms in the preparation of the clergy.

In this context it might be interesting to mention the decree issued by the Emperor in 1933 about the *tazkar*, the memorial to the dead, as it gives us his opinion upon some aspects of clerical life and also throws light upon several points—upon the morals of the clergy, the social life of the people and upon the power of the Emperor who issued such decrees upon his sole authority and with no reference to the advice of the religious heads of the church. In this decree the Emperor speaks of the *tazkar*, the memorial for the dead, in which the people ask the priests to pray for pardon upon the souls of their deceased relatives, and invite their families and friends to the ceremony. It is right, says the

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[1] Wylde, p. 142.

[2] Alvarez, pp. 246–52. See also Matthew, 'The Abyssinian Church', *The Christian East*, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 112–16. This article, written by the Anglican chaplain in Addis Ababa, is a useful summary of the recent position of the church.

[3] Bruce, vol. 3, p. 318, quoted by Rey, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

[4] Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

Emperor, that the priests should be remunerated for their services, but it is not right that they should be encouraged to become so drunk that they start brawling and wounding or lie like dead men about the roads. 'If the people see the priests in a state of drunkenness this is a very bad example to the ignorant.' Moreover, he says, there are other abuses of the *tazkar*. The rich grind down their *gabars* (peasant tenants) to exact tribute for the feast; poor men ruin themselves and are sold up. The Emperor, therefore, to give a good example, has decreed that no *tazkar* should be held for his daughter, who has lately died, but that he would give money to the priests and to the poor and ask their prayers for the repose of the soul of his daughter. He ends by asking the priests to pray for souls, where the family is very poor, without exacting fees.[1]

There is other evidence to show that the present Emperor, before 1935, was fully aware of the state of the clergy, and one attempt to remedy this was made, as we have seen, by sending young men for training in Egypt. In addition to this he began the development of a school for priests attached to the staff of Saint George's Church at the capital. He hoped that in time a theological college might be built up.

Below the order of priests comes that of deacons. These, as has been recorded, were often ordained at a very early age, even in infancy. It became the rule that, since deacons were unmarried and because of the danger of their living immoral lives while serving the church, they must be very young. When they reached the age of puberty they had to cease their service, taking it up again if and when they became priests and entered the obligatory marriage of the priesthood.

Essential for the service of the church are the ministrations of the *debteras*.[2] These are not ordained, but, carrying out a combination of functions which is rather startling to Europeans, they are at once choristers and also, to a large extent, learned men of the church. These men chant the daily offices and take part in nearly all the services, though only as attendants upon a priest. Using drum and sistrum they perform, at times outside the church, the dances or rhythmic movements which may come down from the Jewish traditions—it will be remembered that David danced before the ark—or from earlier pagan Semitic sources, from which the Israelites themselves derived them. Whatever the character of the original, these dances are now restrained and dignified in movement. As the *debteras* have to master all the words of the many services, their training is a more serious undertaking than that of priest, and demands about seven years. Many of the *debteras* thoroughly understand Ge'ez and they are regarded in general as men of learning. Considerable numbers are attached to the larger churches and certain of them draw payments from the endowments; others give their services while continuing some secular employment.

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[1] *Courrier d'Ethiopie*, 12 May 1933.

[2] Ethiopian plural: *debteroch.*

MONKS AND NUNS

The monastic life, as with most eastern churches, plays a large part in Ethiopian religion. Early in the history of the church, probably as the result of an influx of monks from Syria from which country in the fifth century must have come the famous Nine Saints, large numbers of monasteries were built, generally on the hills, and were conducted more as colonies of hermits than as orders with the corporate life under monastic rules common in western Europe. One of the great monasteries of early days was Bizen, in the hills above Massawa; this was described by Alvarez and still continues as a leading monastery in the present Eritrea.[1] The tendency seemed to be for older men and women, especially clerical widowers, who had to give up their clerical functions if they married again, and the widows of clergy, to retire for their old age into the monastic life. Fasting was a constant duty, as it is with the regular clergy and the laity. Some of these monasteries had continued from early times as centres of learning and those who wished to study the holy writings resorted to them. Some of the monasteries had large collections of manuscripts of the holy books in Ge'ez, but much of the teaching remained oral. It must be remembered that both the Abuna and the *Ichegé* were monks, so that the kind of monastic influences they represented had a high place in the church as a whole. No estimate of the number of monks can be found, though Alvarez exclaimed that 'they cover the world, both in the monasteries as also in the churches, roads and markets; they are in every place'.[2] He did, however, give monks credit for living, on the whole, with austerity, which in some cases reached the standard of spending whole nights up to the neck in icy water.[3] When a visitor came to a monastery, the monks, remembering the humility with which Christ washed the feet of His disciples, would perform a like service, and this persists until to-day.[4] The monasteries are often difficult of access and the rule is against the entry of any female creature. Later observers generally ascribed greater morality to the monks than to the clergy and, for all the greater importance of the part played by the latter in the daily life of the people, it seems that the monks had a higher reputation for spirituality.

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[1] Alvarez, pp. 4–7 and 30–5. Alvarez found 300 friars in the monastery and it was then the head of six monasteries. Comparing the accounts of Alvarez with descriptions and photographs of the monastery as it is to-day, it seems to be less impressive now than in 1520.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 288–9.

[4] Sandford, p. 108.

THE PEOPLE AND THE CHURCH

A full description of the religious life of the Ethiopian people to-day would be beyond the scope of this chapter even if adequate sources of information existed. Brief references must, however, be made to a few main features of that life if the position of the church as an institution of government is to be grasped.

The relationship of church and people was, by western standards, somewhat unusual. Priests and their congregations stood in very close relationship, since clerical ministrations were frequently required at personal and public events, and every Christian was under the special care of one priest, who was his 'soul-father'. On the other hand, if a number of European observers are to be believed, the Christian behaviour demanded by the clergy seemed to touch chiefly the external observances of religion rather than its spiritual content. All sins, Plowden remarked, were regarded as venial, so long as, under the care of the clergy, the outward forms and fasts were kept.[1] Members of the Catholic churches might ask whether this lack of spirituality among the Ethiopian churchmen might not be traced to a defect in her sacramental life which must now be explained. At the Eucharist, as in other eastern churches, consecration takes place within the sanctuary which the layman must never enter; parts of the service, however, are audible, and the epistle and gospels are read outside. The sacraments are brought into the inner circle surrounding the sanctuary for the use of the communicants. There are, however, few of these. Most of the congregation stand either in the third or outermost enclosure or ambulatory or right outside the church or even under neighbouring trees. This is because they are technically excommunicate and so unable to receive the sacred elements. To understand this a few words must be said of the position with regard to marriage.

One of the great problems of all missionary work in Africa has been that raised by the attempt to impose Christian sexual ethics and, above all, to substitute Christian monogamous marriage for African polygamy. It is thus of especial interest to learn how a native African Christian Church has, in the 1,600 years of its existence, dealt with this problem. It is to be remarked, first, that chastity is recognized as an ideal. All monks and nuns must take the vow of chastity and the Abuna, though head of a married clergy, must maintain the monastic vow. Clergy, however, must be married before ordination, and, as we have seen, one reason that has been given for the ordination of young boys as deacons, a class which need not be married, is the importance of making sure that none who take part in the service of the Eucharist shall be guilty of sexual irregularities. The clergy and their wives may marry only once, and this explains the tendency among clerical widows and widowers to enter the monastic life.

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[1] Hotten, pp. 160–2.

To the people as a whole is presented this same ideal of Christian monogamous marriage consecrated by the church service and by the Eucharist. 'The law of the Gospel and the Christian ordinances are—one man for one woman and one woman for one man.'[1] This law allows of no divorce on any grounds. Monogamy is also protected by the state, and the 1930 penal code lays down a penalty for bigamy and also enacts a penalty of up to three years' imprisonment in addition to a fine upon both parties for illicit intercourse in cases where the woman was married in church.[2] The vast majority, however, shrink from this obligation and arrange their marriages by local custom before witnesses, and this permits the easy and frequent divorces so common in Ethiopia. Even the great Menelik was ready to choose as his Empress a woman who made him her fifth husband. This extreme looseness of the marriage tie may have developed in partial compensation for the loss of polygamy, but the widespread practice of concubinage, which is so widely recognized as almost to constitute a third form of 'marriage', also made it easy to be a non-polygamous, if excommunicate, Ethiopian Christian. The latter practice was probably especially marked among the wealthier, who could afford a number of slave concubines. Ethiopian genealogies are complicated not only by numerous divorces but also by the recognition of illegitimate children. In the highest families and especially in the imperial household the habits of Solomon—without which, indeed, if tradition is correct, Ethiopia's dynasty would never have been founded—have been widely followed, and King Sahla Selassié, who brought the present Shoan branch to eminence, had 500 'wives' ascribed to him by Krapf. An Abuna of the last century—and it may be noted that Abunas often spoke with considerable detachment of the country of their adoption—said, doubtless with the special emphasis of the monk, that 'Abyssinian marriages, with few exceptions, are so abominably revolting that the issue are all bastards.'[3]

It is thus a result of the refusal of the majority of the people to accept the restraint of Christian marriage that they are technically excommunicate, and this is why they generally attend the Eucharist standing outside the church as mere spectators. The present Emperor's example of Christian family life is thus very exceptional, and it is known that he has used his influence to encourage members of the ruling class to contract church marriages. Reform is certainly needed in the interests of health, as well as of morality, in order to reduce the widespread venereal disease among the Amhara.

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[1] Matthew, *The Teaching of the Abyssinian Church*, p. 56.

[2] Clauses 388, 390, and 392.

[3] Rassam, vol. 2, p. 220.

The technical excommunication is not regarded as such by the Ethiopians mainly because it does not extend to other sacraments; if it did the church would have no flock. The young have, of course, been baptised and confirmed before the age of marriage. Absolution appears for the most part to be a mere form and holy unction is not practised.[1] It seems that a religious funeral is allowed to Ethiopians irrespective of the form of their marriage, but the threat of complete excommunication, which would result in this being denied, gives the priesthood a strong hold over their people. Another important power in the hands of the priests is that of sanctuary, which in the past enabled them to mediate between the people and the rigours of the law. The importance of the clergy is brought out by the many festivals which are publicly celebrated by all Ethiopians. Among these Easter is by far the most important, though more spectacular are Epiphany or *Timqat* and the great day of *Maskal* (the Cross), the commemoration of the finding of the true cross by Saint Helena, though celebrations round the *Maskal* pole suggest an earlier and pagan origin. The clergy set the example also in fasting. Formerly the laity had to follow them upon pain of punishment, but to-day it is regarded as sufficient to fast in Lent and on each Wednesday and Friday. No less than 200 days in a year are fast days, and upon many of them no food may be taken before noon and then meat, milk and eggs are prohibited. Lent extends to eight weeks and ends with a complete fast of forty-eight hours. Only the more devout keep all these fasts.

Most critics of the Ethiopian religion agree that its most serious defect is a reliance among both priests and people upon formal observances rather than upon righteousness of life. Rigid observance of feasts and fasts seems to be regarded as the first, and too often as the only, duty of Ethiopian Christians. To the ritual of the Coptic Church has been added a number of apparently Hebraic practices. Some consider these to be a result of Jewish immigration or influences, probably from Arabia in pre-Muslim days, while others ascribe it to the Ethiopian enthusiasm for forms, coupled with their respect for the written word, in this case the Old Testament.[2] Ethiopians, for example, observe the Sabbath as well as Sunday; distinguish clean and unclean meat and veil their sanctuaries. It is possible, however, that in keeping

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[1] Though it appears to be recognized as a sacrament. See Matthew, *The Teaching of the Abyssinian Church*, p. 58.

[2] O'Leary, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–6.

Saturday as well as Sunday distinct from other week-days, as in giving a greater importance to Epiphany than to Christmas, the Ethiopians are simply retaining customs of the primitive church. Pagan survivals have also been noticed, especially where Galla influence is strong, but it is to be remarked that so much of the African inheritance, and above all the evil elements of witchcraft, almost universal elsewhere in the pagan parts of the continent, is not shared by these peoples of Semitic and Hamitic culture. Magical superstitions do enter even into some of the holy books, but these are often derived from Hebrew cabbalistic writings.[1]

The Ethiopians have numerous saints, as they have added their own to eastern hagiology. After the Trinity, their devotion is to Saints Michael and George and to the Virgin Mary, and it throws light upon more than their religious ideas to know that they believe that Christ granted Ethiopia as a fief to His Mother and that she accepted it as her tithe of the universe.[2]

It must not be thought that Ethiopian Christianity, however much limited to the form and the letter, is something reduced to childish or primitive terms. This view is easily corrected by a reading of the theological disputations which nearly all missionaries have had to encounter. Their theology has not been developed as in the west. Yet it was a subtle theological difference, the belief that the divinity of Christ had absorbed His manhood, which cut the Ethiopian monophysites off from the western and Orthodox churches. Differences equally subtle created religious parties among the Ethiopians themselves. As late as the last century men suffered persecution because they maintained that, following Christ's birth as the Son of God, and His physical birth, the coming of the Holy Spirit was to be regarded as a third birth. Many other examples could be given of the refinement of theological studies in Ethiopia. To the enthusiastic religious interest of the people, from Emperors to peasants, almost every page of the country's chronicles bears witness. The whole literature of the country is, indeed, either religious, or is steeped in religious thought. Many wars were fought for religious reasons. There were the recurrent wars in which the people, even when deserted by their rulers, rose against the imposition of Roman Catholicism; there was another as to whether Sunday or Saturday should be the holy day. Again there was fighting because an Italian artist put the infant Christ upon the left instead of the right arm of the Virgin Mary.

Although reference has been made to some unfavourable opinions passed by travellers upon the Ethiopian Church and clergy, since these are parts of the historical record of the church, the writer does not presume to pass any comment upon the spiritual value of this church to-day. The Ethiopians, though even now passing through profound and abrupt changes, were, at least up to 1936, still in the religious climate of the middle ages when the whole of secular life was infused with religion and when, in complement, religion itself had an earthy flavour. Indeed, to understand something of the meaning of a situation in which church, state and community are bound together by the same faith, we must turn back to our own twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Such typically medieval figures as the superstitious layman who, returning from a murder, is shocked to find his wife grinding corn on a forbidden day,[1] the carnal priest and the clamorously begging friar have, in Ethiopia, lived on into our own day. But so have the saintly monk and the merciful ruler who, in the fifth decade of the twentieth century, in the endeavour to fulfil the Gospel, will forgive even treason. And does not the medieval character of Ethiopia stand out in clear contrast with the ruthless and godless militarism of the modern totalitarian state, in the sneer which de Bono, after failing in every attempt to provoke the Emperor into hostilities, throws at his enemy? 'At present the *Negus Neghasti* is ordering too many prayers and fasts to give us reason to think that he wishes to attack us.'[2]

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[1] Ullendorff, E., *Exploration and Study of Abyssinia*, Asmara, 1945, p. 55.

[2] Coulbeaux, vol. 1, p.73 .

Some of the criticisms of Ethiopians arise from differences of custom. It is worth recording that the Ethiopians were shocked to see their earliest European visitors spit in the churches. The first European investigator of the church, though himself a priest, was not ashamed to confess his admiration of much, even of most, of their religious practices, and he records how all men dismounted when they passed a church; how devoted Christians washed the lepers and tended their sores, and when he asked why there were no crucifixes to be seen, he was told that it was because they felt this was something they were not worthy to look upon.[3] Plowden, a man of insight and imagination, balances his own criticisms of Ethiopian Christianity with the remark that, in spite of all, 'good and moral men are still found', and he stated his belief that, for all its debasement, Christianity had saved Ethiopia from 'the wantonness of crime and excess of cruelty that stains the records of almost all African races, and of some in other quarters of the globe'—a belief he would have repeated with more emphasis to-day.[1] Wylde, most friendly and responsive of modern travellers, has much good to say of the courtesy and kindness of the priests and the effects of their religion upon the character of the people.[2]

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[1] Hotten, p. 160.

[2] Bono, E. de, *Anno XIIII*, 1937, p. 117.

[3] Alvarez, p. 410. For his interesting general account of the church see pp. 401–12.

THE EMPEROR'S REFORMS

Mention has been made from time to time in this chapter of the reforming influence of the present Emperor in the affairs of the church. There can be no doubt that in the first part of his reign, especially in the years before he had consolidated his position, he had to reckon with the powerful, if passive, opposition of the clergy to his reforming policy. Conservative resistance found influential support from the old Abuna Matthew, and afterwards in the Empress Zawditu; the first of these died in 1926, the second in 1930.

It is easy to understand this resistance. The church had become rigid as a result of enduring through many centuries of isolation and danger. It looked backwards to find much of its authority and guidance in ancient legends and documents, some of them of doubtful authority or even without authenticity. Moreover, the wealth and secular position of its clergy were built into the existing medieval fabric of society, with its methods of land-holding, of tribute and of slavery. The clergy inevitably viewed reform, education and foreign innovation with distrust, and the Regent, as he then was, seemed the living embodiment of these new forces. It is a credit at once to the tact and to the genuine religious devotion of Haile Selassié that he was able to disarm these suspicions sufficiently to prevent the church from presenting a solid front against him, or rallying the conservative forces sufficiently to prevent his rise to power or to block his many reforms in both periods of his reign.

The Emperor did much to encourage the work of foreign missions. Resistance here was less than might have been expected. Ethiopians were not, when allowance is made for historical conditions, markedly intolerant or unreceptive. Most travellers met with some measure of suspicion from the clergy, yet even their conduct, once Roman Catholic domination had been successfully defied, was not unreasonable. Roman Catholic missionaries were, with Protestants, allowed in the middle of the nineteenth century to return to the country. Though they were expelled for a time by the Emperors Theodore and John, they were re-admitted by Menelik, and some of them were on the most friendly terms with Menelik and with the present Emperor, who was educated partly at the French mission at Harar. In the chapter upon education something will be said of the contribution of foreign missionaries to education.[1] Their main effort was directed towards the pagan groups, and their influence upon the church has been slight and wholly indirect. Indeed, any direct attempt to convert, still more to attack, the doctrines of the Ethiopian Church would have been, especially for the missions, a disastrous policy. Most of the missionaries have acted upon the conviction that their duty was to establish friendly relationships with a sister church and to offer anything in the way of services and ideas that that church felt able to accept. Some missionaries, however, have found themselves out of sympathy with the spirit and the forms of the Ethiopian Church and have formed their converts into separate Christian bodies.

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[1] Hotten, pp. 161–2.

[2] Wylde, pp. 139 ff.

There can be little doubt that the Emperor himself has acted as a medium of communication between foreign churches, working in this spirit, and his own church. Naturally tolerant, he also appreciated the help the missions could give in the spheres of education and health. He has, to give another example of his influence, thrown himself wholeheartedly into the attempt to spread as widely as possible the use of the Bible in Amharic. Menelik himself had set the example here in his interest in the Bible and had once written to protest at what he regarded as the European practice of neglecting the Old Testament by concentration upon the New, a practice, he said, to which Christ Himself gave no countenance. The work of the British and Foreign Bible Society had spread in the nineteenth century to Ethiopia and had resulted in a greatly increased circulation of the Bible in Amharic. A British missionary in the middle of the last century testified to the eagerness with which the Bibles he distributed were received by the people.[2] It seems that the Bible was first printed in this language, section by section, in London between 1824 and 1840, when the complete text appeared. It had before been available only in Ge'ez, and then only in expensive manuscript form. 'O God!' exclaimed the Emperor Theodore to the British agent, Rassam, 'how can we Abyssinians forget the English who have given us so many thousand Bibles!' Whereas there had been only a few in the whole country, now every village could have its own.[3] The British and Foreign Bible Society's work was welcomed also by the present Emperor who opened a centre for it in Addis Ababa in 1926 and did much to encourage its work between that date and 1935.[4]

The Emperor arranged for the publication of the Gospels and the liturgy with the texts in Ge'ez and Amharic in parallel columns. He also arranged for a new translation into Amharic of the entire Bible to be made in Ethiopia; this work was finished in 1934 in manuscript form, written on parchment in both languages and richly illuminated. The Italian invasion prevented the printing of this in Ethiopia, but the manuscript was taken to England and the late Mr. A. B. Buxton, who belonged to the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society, raised money there with which an edition in four volumes was produced by photographic process just before the second world war. Unfortunately, the greater part of the edition was destroyed by bombing.[1] The Emperor arranged for the translation of other religious books and for their circulation especially amongst the schools.

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[1] See below, pp. 247, 255.

[2] Stern, H. A., *Wanderings among the Falashas in Abyssinia*, 1862, p. 271.

[3] Rassam, vol. 2, p. 139.

[4] Anstein, H., *Die abessinische Kirche*, Stuttgart, 1935, pp. 23 ff.

Nothing could have a deeper effect than the putting into the hands of Ethiopians, as an increasing number of them become literate, of the Bible. According to one view, the deadness and formalism of the church in Ethiopia is due more to ignorance of the Bible than to the widespread ineligibility to receive the Eucharistic sacrament. This is clearly a question upon which different religious schools would diverge. The Emperor also began to encourage the practice of preaching which, though there are ancient books of homilies in Ge'ez, seems to have been almost non-existent when he came to the throne.

THE ITALIAN OCCUPATION[2]

In reviewing Italian policy towards the Ethiopian Church it is necessary to remember that Mussolini's government was pursuing mainly secular ends. In the years between his occupation of Rome and the Lateran Treaty 1929, there had been little co-operation between the Italian state and the Italian Church in the foreign missions. Even in pre-Fascist days France and Britain had supplied most of the evangelistic enterprise in the colonial territories. Ethiopians who dreaded that Italian conquest might mean the destruction of their church in the interests of another towards which they had a deep and ancient hostility might have taken comfort from a study of Eritrea. Here, after more than half a century of Italian rule, it appears that less than 30,000 Eritreans had joined the Roman Catholic Church.

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[1] 'The Bible in Ethiopia' (quoting an article in the *South African Church Weekly*), *New Times*, 21 March 1942.

[2] I am indebted for some of the information in this and the next few paragraphs to two very authoritative sources which I am not at liberty to name, also to an unpublished chapter upon the Italian occupation by Dr. L. P. Mair. For other material upon the church under the Italians, see A. F. Matthew, 'The Church in Ethiopia', *Church Times*, 12 January 1945, p. 18, and the several Italian sources upon the period 1935–41 which will be found in the list of books at the end, but which in this as in other matters must be used with discrimination.

As the Italian officials settled down to their task of administering Ethiopia, they were free to evolve a policy that was not dictated by any great past tradition or present enthusiasm for the spread of the Roman Catholic Church. Their main object was at once to weaken, control and, subject to this, conciliate the church of their new subjects. One obvious method of weakening it, with the Amhara domination from which they had most to fear, was to encourage Islam.

In Ethiopia, according to the constitution of the Italian Empire, 'absolute respect for religions' in so far as these did not conflict 'with public order and the general principles of civilization', was guaranteed. In practice, however, the Italian authorities, especially at the start, showed much greater respect to the Muslim than to the Christian religion and every effort was made to advertise the role of the Italians in freeing the Muslims from an oppression which had not, in fact, existed. Much publicity was given to the encouragement of Harar as a great Muslim centre and to the support of the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Italians, indeed, trying to forget the injuries they had inflicted upon Muslim groups in North Africa, endeavoured to build up the Muslims as their most loyal adherents, playing upon their anti-Shoan bias. Mosques were built or planned in the main Muslim centres, often in close neighbourhood to the *case di fascio*. In a flamboyant gesture, Balbo flew from North Africa to Ethiopia bringing a sword of honour from the one group of Muslims to the other.

In dealing with the Ethiopian Church the Italians gave way at first to their desire to punish and injure the church which was the complement of the nationalism they had fought and still had to fear. Open hostility towards the Ethiopian Church was shown by a somewhat superfluous decree of September 1937, in which the right of the church to crown the Emperors was taken away on the ground of the offence this right gave to 'nearly three million Muslims'. A great many priests and monks were killed in the early days of the occupation. An unforgivable act followed the attempt upon the life of Marshal Graziani. This was the massacre of the monks of the great monastery of Debra Libanos on the grounds that they had some complicity in this attempt. It appears that this massacre was not even done in hot blood and that the Italians held their hands until a large number of monks and students gathered together for the feast of Takla Haimanot and murdered them all. Another massacre is reported to have taken place at Zukwala. Of the four Ethiopian bishops in the country at the time of the occupation, Petros was captured while with an Ethiopian force in 1936 and was shot in the market-place of Addis Ababa, while another, Michael, was also put to death for helping the resistance movement. During 1946 a striking statue of Bishop Petros was unveiled by the Emperor at the capital to commemorate 'the martyrdom of an Ethiopian patriot'.[1]

It was realized increasingly, however, as the conquerors settled down to their task, that mere repression would not fulfil their objects. It was necessary to bring the church under their control and yet to use its influence. It was therefore decided to separate it from its external affiliations. The Fascist Government therefore set to work to break the links with Egypt. There were two clear additional gains to be made from this. It was hoped that some appeal would be made to Ethiopian national feeling which had already, as we have seen, shown some slight stirring against Alexandrian control in the matter of the consecration of bishops. It would also, on the political side, cut the connection with Egypt and also with Jerusalem, places where British influence was strong, and where a number of refugees had collected. If the church could be isolated from these contacts, it would be completely dominated by its conquerors.

The Egyptian Abuna, Cyril, was therefore allowed to continue his functions and it was made clear that the Italians did not intend to make a frontal attack upon the church as a whole. An attempt was made to induce the Abuna Cyril to agree with the policy of independence from Alexandria. He had shown no overt objection to playing his part under the Italians: he was said to have preached submission to the new government, and he was present with Graziani at the public occasion when the Marshal's assassination was attempted. When he had recovered from his own wounds, he was sent to Italy, but he refused, as might have been expected, to countenance the proposed change in the status of the Ethiopian Church, and retired to Egypt. Of the two remaining bishops, the Italians persuaded the aged and half-blind Abraham to accept their policy, while Isaac, after a period of imprisonment, also submitted.[2] An ecclesiastical assembly was called which agreed with the policy of independence and chose Abraham to be the first metropolitan. He consecrated twelve other bishops before he died in 1939, after which one of these, John, succeeded him. He also issued a statement, at the demand of the Italians, thanking the government for their beneficence, proclaiming their guarantee of the rights of the church and respect for its property, etc., promising pardon to all who submitted to the government in fifteen days and anathematizing all who continued resistance even to the point of forbidding priests to give Christian burial to all who should die as rebels. It is difficult to estimate how many priests showed passive or open resistance to this policy of complaisance to the conquerors; much must have depended upon the degree of control exercised by the Italians and it is reported that the clergy of the still largely unsubdued province of Gojjam refused to attend the synods at the capital.

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[1] *Herald*, 22 July 1946.

[2] It is frequently said that Bishop Abraham's sight was injured by poison gas, but the writer has not yet found authoritative evidence about this. There is an Italian claim that he was suffering from cataract and that Italian doctors improved his sight.

The response from the Coptic Patriarch was uncompromising. The new, schismatic metropolitan was excommunicated as soon as the news reached Egypt and with him all the bishops who had been, or should be, consecrated by him and all who should have any dealings with them.

The Italian viceroy in 1940 proceeded to issue regulations drawn up in consultation with the conforming bishops and clergy, which, in effect, gave the church a new constitution. It divided Ethiopia into ten bishoprics. It was drawn up in conservative terms with much reference to the *Fetha Nagast* (the book of the laws which will be described in the next chapter) but, according to a commentator of great authority, one of its main results would have been to increase the dependence of the church upon the viceroy while nothing was done to remedy the great defect of the institution, the low education of the clergy, which alone would have revived the church.

It would clearly be no part of the viceroy's policy to foster a simultaneous evangelistic attack upon the Ethiopian Church in the interests of Roman Catholicism. True, Mussolini's government had come to terms with the Pope, but it was very far from conceiving itself as his agent. It would hardly have been consistent with the policy of isolating the national church to begin to build up a new external relationship even with Rome. It does not appear that any attempt was made to win over prominent Amharas to Roman Catholicism though some mission work was begun in pagan areas. The main effort of the Roman Church in Ethiopia was directed towards the very numerous Italian community: it was to them the many priests were sent and for them the new and rather grandiose cathedrals and churches were built or planned.

It was, however, consistent with the governing policy to expel all non-Italian missions and even non-Italian Roman societies. Thus not only were the Protestant missionaries expelled and their property confiscated for the use of Italian clergy, but even the old and much respected French bishop, Monsignor Jarrousseau, who had worked for long in Harar, was obliged to leave and was replaced by an Italian.

RELATIONS WITH ALEXANDRIA SINCE 1941

With the restoration of the Emperor the old question of relations between Ethiopia and Alexandria, which had been raised even before the Italian conquest, was presented in a most urgent and embarrassing form. The church in Egypt was held to have done very little even towards its clear duty of helping the refugees and providing spiritual ministrations for those who, as in Kenya, had become sheep without a shepherd. It is reported that the Egyptian clerics were troubled by a quite unfounded suspicion that the Church of England was aiming in some way to take advantage of the situation and gain control of the daughter church. The imminent restoration of the Emperor awoke the Coptic authorities to action but it is not surprising that they did not meet with a very warm or immediate response from the Ethiopian authorities. The offer that the former Abuna Cyril should accompany the Emperor upon his return was set aside; this honour fell upon the faithful *Ichegé*. The photographs of that dramatic moment when the Emperor stepped across the frontier in the wild region of the Upper Dinder and unfurled his flag, show the *Ichegé*, a fine figure of a man in his flowing black ceremonial robes, standing beside him.[1] Upon the *Ichegé* fell the whole heavy burden of reorganizing the leaderless church. In June 1942 the Abuna Cyril returned—uninvited, if reports are true—in company with a delegation from Alexandria and, as a result, the excommunications, which do not seem to have had much practical effect upon the Ethiopian Church, were rescinded. When the delegation returned to Egypt, the Abuna Cyril remained in Ethiopia. He was gradually allowed to take his old place and religious functions but the administration of the church remained completely in the hands of the *Ichegé*.

The position was complex and difficult. The Emperor and most of his ministers wished to appoint an Ethiopian head of the church. They were, however, loath to accept a situation of Italian making and, moreover, they could hardly countenance bishops created by the Italians and disloyal to the imperial cause. On the other hand, in the interests of the rights they wished to demand, they were not inclined to accept the excommunication of these men and many others by the Patriarch, more especially as they felt he had given little help or sympathy to them in their hour of need. In the face of these cross-currents and in a matter of such weight in which the feeling of the church and people must be carefully assessed, it was clearly politic to move with some caution.

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[1] *Ethiopian Review*, May 1945, p. 23.

It is impossible not to break off here to remark upon the impressive moderation and tolerance shown, especially by the returning Emperor and the leading patriots, in face of a situation which, as regards both the conduct of large numbers of the clergy during the interregnum and also the relations with the Egyptian ecclesiastical authorities, might have given rise to the bitterest divisions and recriminations. But, however quiet and seemly the behaviour of the parties, it was clear that the relationship with Egypt could never be the same again. Apart from any faults of omission or commission by the Coptic Church during Ethiopia's ordeal, the nationalism, which had already begun to question the relationship before 1935, was now inflamed to a consciousness and intensity that would be satisfied with nothing less than a great advancement of status, if not, indeed, with autonomy. The reasons for the change, which is being consummated as these words are written, were almost entirely political; there is no doctrinal rift between the churches.

The delegation which conveyed to Egypt in 1942 the wishes of the Ethiopian Church met with delays due to the death of the Coptic Patriarch and to disputes as to the selection of his successor. In June 1944, however, another delegation was sent to Ethiopia. After discussions they took back with them a document containing the Ethiopian demands; the most important of these were that an Ethiopian should be chosen as metropolitan, and that an Ethiopian synod should choose bishops and suffragans to be consecrated by him. The Ethiopian Church should take part in choosing the Coptic Patriarch and in the proceedings of the Coptic Synod. This document, and especially the first two demands, caused some perturbation in Coptic circles.

After considerable delay[1] on the 16th of June 1945 the Coptic Synod met and refused outright the first two requests of the Ethiopians.[2] Several meetings of the Ecclesiastical Council, a body normally consisting of some twelve persons but probably enlarged upon this occasion, were called in Addis Ababa. At these ministers and leading clergy discussed the problem. At a meeting on the 18th of November 1945, it was decided that the replies from Alexandria were unsatisfactory. The opinion was now openly stated that the Ethiopian Church had not been particularly benefited by the union, especially in the matter of the education of clergy, while enormous inconvenience was suffered in the country because the Ethiopian bishops could not ordain. It was also asserted that the Egyptian church had deserted her daughter during the Italian occupation. It was pointed out that a similar petition to that of 1944 had been sent in the year A.D. 1140 and that the Ethiopians had shown great patience in waiting 800 years for an answer. The ministers present intervened to ask for a little further patience, one of them saying that the Egyptians still believed that all older members of the Ethiopian church were against the movement for reform, and that this was the work of youth. One more attempt should be made to convince them that the whole church was behind this request.[1]

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[1] This long-drawn-out dispute was fully reported in *Misri*, the *Egyptian Gazette*, and other Egyptian papers especially during June and December 1942, January, February, May, and September 1944.

[2] Some of the facts in this part of the chapter are derived from unpublished articles by the Rev. A. F. Matthew, which he has kindly allowed the writer to see.

On the 26th of November 1945 a further conference was called in Addis Ababa. The Emperor sent a message suggesting that more delegates might be sent to Alexandria. The conference held a debate in the course of which they worked out their revised interpretation of ancient history by asserting that Frumentius had been chosen (about A.D. 326) by the Ethiopians and not by the Alexandrian Patriarch Athanasius, who merely anointed him, and that it was not any synod, nor the Emperor Constantine, but only the Egyptian Coptic Church which had decreed that no Ethiopian should ever be appointed as metropolitan. Finally the issue as to whether, according to the request of the Ethiopian Government, another delegation should be sent or whether the Ethiopians should proceed to elect their own chief bishop was put to the vote. Twenty-five persons voted for the first measure, and seventy-one for the second. The onus of the final decision was thus taken (probably in such a vital matter, with some prearrangement) by a predominantly ecclesiastical assembly with the government acting, apparently, as a reluctant and restraining force.[2] It was inevitable that the composition of this iconoclastic clerical assembly should be questioned in Egypt but no serious attempt could be made to discount it.

The record of this book does not in general go beyond the end of 1945. It is difficult, however, to break the story at this point, and a brief summary of later developments may be added here. It was reported in February 1946 that the 'Coptic Church has finally decided to bow before Ethiopian pressure for autonomy. It is understood in Cairo that Ethiopia will now become an Archbishopric of the Coptic Church, bound to it only by allegiance to the same Patriarch. Following a movement in Addis Ababa for complete separation from the Church of Egypt, the Emperor sent a mission to Cairo to try to persuade the Copts to consider the Ethiopian demands. Now, less than a week after the delegates' arrival in Cairo, the Coptic Holy Synod has decided to grant the major Ethiopian requests. These include the election of an

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[1] *Herald*, 26 November 1945.

[2] *Herald*, 3 December 1945.

Archbishop from their own clergy and the formation of a Holy Synod.'[1]

This optimism was premature. Further difficulties developed, especially with regard to the power of the Ethiopian metropolitan (or archbishop) to consecrate bishops, a right which the Patriarch of Alexandria insisted upon reserving. The *Herald* of the 20th of May 1946 printed a letter from the Emperor to the Patriarch, carried by two delegates. These were accompanied by five Ethiopian bishops-elect, apparently presenting themselves for consecration. The Emperor reserved all rights, and enclosed a letter to himself from the Ethiopian Ecclesiastical Council rejecting with great vigour the latest demands of Alexandria with regard to the consecration of bishops; the inadequate representation of the 'ten million Ethiopian Christians' on the Coptic Synod and the control of religious schools in Ethiopia by the Patriarch. The Council offered to follow the Patriarchs as Holy Fathers in all that touched religion, but 'maintain their unanimous decision of last year in favour of the independence of the Ethiopian Church'.

Both sides, however, still held back from the final, irrevocable ending of their long association. In spite of the strong attitude of the Ecclesiastical Council, the Emperor authorized yet another delegation to Egypt in January 1946. Prolonged negotiations did not enable the two parties to agree upon the all-important question of the exact powers and status of an Ethiopian metropolitan and his bishops. The Egyptian Government, which was unwilling to see the Coptic Church lose all its authority over Ethiopia, intervened and so the strange spectacle of arbitration by a Muslim government was witnessed. Even when this failed negotiations still continued and in July still another Egyptian delegation visited Addis Ababa. At the time when this book goes to press no decision has been announced.

In the heat of the controversy, in which the Emperor still plays the part of restraining the impatience of his clergy, there has been a tendency in Ethiopia to revise past history; to assert the forged character of the canon enacting the appointment of Egyptian metropolitans; to depreciate the part these prelates have played in the Ethiopian Church and to point out that the daughter church has now grown to be stronger than her mother and will no longer accept 'this intolerable régime of servitude'.[2] It has, indeed, been extremely interesting to observe the development of the Ethiopian case in the official press until by the middle of 1946 a series of articles in the official newspaper, the *Herald*, gave a long restatement of the history of the relations of the Ethiopian and Coptic Churches.[3] In these, very serious accusations were made against the Abuna Cyril for deserting the Ethiopian Church during the Italian occupation. It was insisted that Ethiopia's doctrine was the pure gospel of the early church and she was not obliged to accept the later administrative regulations of Alexandria, while the facts of history, geography, and population forbade her remaining a mere diocese of another church.

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[1] *The Times*, 2 February 1946.

[2] *Herald*, 1 July 1946.

[3] *Herald*, 1, 7, 15, 22, and 29 July 1946.

It thus seems that a relationship which has lasted for nearly 1,600 years is likely to be broken by unilateral Ethiopian action. It is not difficult to find the governing motive in this policy. The Ethiopian official newspaper, doubtless reflecting the attitude in the capital and among the educated and official groups, remarked that the decision was in conformity with the Atlantic Charter and 'with the newer trend toward full national self-expression for the nations of the world.'[1]

RECENT REFORMS

The long-drawn-out differences with the mother church did not distract the Emperor and his advisers from the problem of internal reform. There can be no doubt that here, too, the initiative was with Haile Selassié. His main objects appear to have been to fuse the church more closely with the re-organized state and to improve the education of the clergy.

The church was certainly in need of help. It had gone through a period of distress and demoralization; it had been separated from its Patriarchs and its Emperor at once; its titular leaders and large numbers of the clergy had accepted a foreign yoke; very many churches had been destroyed and their resources impoverished. An appeal to the clergy and laity to show some self-help in this matter, issued by the *Ichegé* in 1941 and 1942, met with only a limited response, and it was clear that a stronger lead was required.

On the 30th of November 1942 the first law dealing with the church was issued.[2] It is interesting constitutionally to notice that this law was issued under the name of decree, the only other decree of the year being that setting up the new provincial administration. It may be remarked, further, that the decree was issued under the authority of article 11 of the constitution, which allows the Emperor to lay down the organization of 'all administrative departments' and appoint and dismiss civil and military officials, but which says nothing of the church. No mention is made in the preamble of the parliament; instead the wording runs, 'Whereas We have noted and approved the proposals which the

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[1] *Ibid.*, 3 December 1945.

[2] Regulations for the Administration of the Church, Decree No. 2 of 1942.

Ecclesiastical Council has considered and put forward concerning the administration of the Church'.

The main objects of this decree were to put the financial situation of the church in order, to create a central fund and to provide for the appointment of the clergy. The Italians had abolished the exemption of the church lands from taxation and their policy was to be continued.

Article 1 lists the various categories of land which have been given to the church and which are in future to be called the landed properties of the church. These are now to be taxed and the tax payable upon them is to be used for church maintenance.

Articles 2, 3, and 4 provide that whoever, whether layman or cleric, owns church fiefs or lands shall pay the tax upon them at the usual government rate, but that it shall be paid straight into a new institution, the central church treasury. These funds are to be used for church purposes, education and charity. The *Alaqa* is to be responsible for paying into the local church treasuries all the fees and offerings paid as donations or for clerical services (article 8).

With regard to the appointment of the clergy, article 6 enacts that they shall have 'good character and ability; they shall be appointed in fixed numbers to each Church according to its requirements and shall be assigned work of which they are capable and shall be provided with pay'. They were also required to remain attached to the parish to which they were appointed. It appears that all the higher appointments are to be made by the Ecclesiastical Council with the approval of the Emperor.

Article 10, while admitting that the church has a private jurisdiction over its congregations through the confessional and the infliction of spiritual penalties, removes from it all its former temporal jurisdiction which now rests with the Emperor's judges. As some of the churches formerly had jurisdiction with authority to inflict fines, this change cannot have been very popular.

To European eyes this decree is very vaguely worded and it is difficult to believe that under its indefinite clauses the very large reforms which it introduces can be effectively enforced. It is probable that in dealing with the church it was felt desirable at first to proceed somewhat gently and to leave the clerical authorities to enforce the law in their own way and, perhaps, in their own time. The main change here is that the vast lands of the church, hitherto exempt from any taxation, are now brought into the general system after being relieved in many cases of some burden with which it had previously been charged in the service of the church. A central treasury has been set up to receive this tax and in 1944 it was reported that thirty per cent of its revenues were being devoted to administrative expenses, twenty per cent each to schools, to church restoration and medical treatment and to clergy pensioners, and ten per cent to reserve. There has, it is reported, been some resistance to the novelty of paying tax on church lands. An attempt has been made to cut down the excessive number of clergy attached to some churches.

The Emperor has taken up other reforms which were only in the stage of initiation before 1935. Perhaps the most important of these is the better education of the clergy, or, at least, of a selected few out of their vast numbers. In October 1942 some classes, including instruction in English, were opened for priests. It was indicative of the changing attitude to religious matters, and especially to the mother church, that it was possible to question openly in the press whether eminence in monastic austerity were by itself a sufficient qualification for the highest ecclesiastical offices.[1] Upon the Emperor's initiative, and paid for from his Civil List, the Theological College of the Holy Trinity Church was opened in December 1944. By June 1945 there were some 200 students at the college coming from all parts of the country. The college includes a school for deacons, and offers a course for junior priests which comprises secular as well as theological subjects. The director is a Copt who has been teaching in the country since 1943 and he has three other graduates from the Coptic Theological College in Cairo, the remaining eight teachers being Ethiopian. Ge'ez, Amharic, Arabic, and English are taught. There are, of course, biblical and liturgical studies, while the secular subjects of Ethiopian and general history, geography, hygiene and arithmetic have been added.[2]

The establishment of this college has been no easy task. It has naturally been a focus for conservative suspicions. To allay these it has thus proved necessary to concentrate upon Ge'ez rather than Amharic and to agree that no teaching, not even in hygiene, should be given by anyone who was not a monophysite Christian. The Egyptian teachers are confined to secular subjects except for church history. Yet, small though it may seem, this beginning is of the greatest promise for the future of the church, and the liberalizing influence of the secular subjects may lead to more intellectual windows being opened, especially if, as is hoped, comparative religion is later added to the syllabus.

The Emperor has pressed on with his other reforms. Religious books in Amharic have been put into circulation, and if in some of these the religious content is still too much fused with legendary matter and if some of the teaching falls short of the higher spiritual levels, the beginning of an attempt to instruct the laity must be welcomed. In the matter of preaching also the Emperor has revived his earlier efforts. At the Epiphany celebrations in 1944 preachers went round addressing the large crowds, and specially selected preachers have been posted at important churches in the provinces to work there and in the surrounding country. Sermons have also been given over the Addis Ababa wireless.

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[1] *Review*, June 1945, p. 7.

[2] *Ibid.*

FOREIGN MISSIONS

Something has been said above of the work of the foreign missionaries and more will be said in the following chapter about their work for education.[1] It was estimated that in 1935 there were some 180 foreign missionaries in the country. The Italian Government, violating the conventions which governed the treatment of missions in Africa and by which Italian communities were freely allowed to work in British territories, made it impossible for Protestant missionaries to stay in the country. The decree of 1937 by which no non-Italian missions might conduct schools would not in itself have been tantamount to expulsion, since some of the missions would have been content to continue their work of evangelism among the pagans. Nevertheless, of the 180 missionaries present in 1935 only eight were remaining in 1940.[2] The Italians even managed, as we have seen, to get rid of the French Roman Catholic missionaries.

After the restoration the missionaries were able to return. Among Protestant groups are the Sudan Interior Mission, the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society, the American United Presbyterians' Mission, the Swedish Lutherans' National Evangelical Mission, the Bibeltrogner Vanner Mission (Swedish) and the Seventh Day Adventist Mission. The important French mission in Harar had not been revived by the end of 1945 but the work was being carried on by missionaries of British nationality. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel is responsible for the British chaplain in Addis Ababa, and the Rev. A. F. Matthew, an old friend of the Ethiopians and a very sympathetic student of their church, has returned to his post.

Although the missionaries were allowed to return in 1942, a position of some uncertainty developed as to the range of their operations. To the ever-present religious suspicions of the Ethiopians has been added some nationalist doubts about the influence of foreigners in such vital matters as religion and education. When the Ministry of Education took over the control of the missions, restrictions were imposed upon them which led in 1943 to protests.

In August 1944 the Ethiopian Government pronounced its policy by a decree[3] which, we may note for constitutional interest, made no mention of parliament nor of ecclesiastical advice, nor of article 11 of the constitution, but was issued upon the sole authority of the Emperor. The preamble of this important measure stated the need for defining policy towards the missions so as to ensure the closest possible collaboration between the government and the missions. The preamble then went on 'Whereas it is the desire of this Government that Missions should not direct their activities towards converting Ethiopian nationals from their own form of Christianity which has existed from the beginning of the Christian era, but rather that they should concentrate on non-Christian elements of the population. . . .'

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[1] See below, pp. 247, 255.

[2] Information from Dr. L. P. Mair.

[3] Regulations on the Establishment of Missions, Decree No. 3 of 1944.

Another reason given for the law was the prevention of overlapping.

The decree proper sets up in clause 2 a committee on missions, presided over by the Minister of Education and consisting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of the Interior. Applications to establish missions were to be sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and by him sent on to the Minister of Education. If the latter allows the application, he should specify the area within which the mission was to confine its activities; he should consider whether it was a recognized society of experience and reputation (clause 4).

All missions established in the country were ordered to send in full particulars of their numbers, area, and activities. The committee was to establish 'open areas' and 'Ethiopian Church areas' according to the principles laid down in the preamble. But, to meet special conditions, closed areas could be demarcated within open areas, and vice versa (clause 7). Missions might conduct medical and undenominational educational work within the closed areas (clause 9). In such areas religious instruction should be confined 'to the principles of Christianity common to all Christian Churches'. The Minister of Education might request schools and hospitals in closed areas to admit Ethiopian church teachers (clause 9). Missionaries might enter closed areas to teach the Christian faith to their own adherents but not to proselytize (clause 10). In open areas they might teach and preach without restriction (clause 11).

The capital was declared to be an open area (clause 12). Amharic was to be the general language of instruction and missionaries were required to learn it. In the final clauses (15 and 16) the Minister of Education was given certain rights of control over the school syllabus and the property of missions and the power to deport, without appeal, any missionary contravening the law and to close down the work of a mission. The Minister of the Interior also has the power to deport.

This law is an interesting indication of the Ethiopian point of view in a very vital matter. It is difficult to compare it with the measures for missions in force elsewhere, since Ethiopia is one of the few Christian countries where foreign Christian missions have established themselves and the sensitive attitude of the Ethiopians may be fully understood. Indeed, considering the present mood of the country, the decree, though it is understood to have caused some protests from some one or two of the societies, was accepted as on the whole a very reasonable measure. Everything depends, of course, upon how the Minister of Education, in conjunction with his two fellow ministers, uses what appear to be his very large powers, and how the boundaries between open and closed areas and also between the several mission areas are drawn. An interesting provision which has often attracted British colonial governments when they have been troubled by the competitive expansion of rival denominations but which, to the best of the writer's belief, has not been kept in force in any British dependency, is the allocation of separate areas to missions.[1] We may remark that it is only the Christian areas that are to be inviolate from religious teaching; Muslim as well as pagan areas are to be open to the missionaries. The freedom to proselytize in non-Christian areas was probably conceded when it was discovered that the missions were not willing to provide educational and medical services, which were so much needed, if they were not allowed to engage in religious instruction. It might be feared that, as Ethiopia becomes more unified and civilized, she would find a number of denominational enclaves created by foreign churches which may produce somewhat less assimilable and docile citizens than those who adhere to the state church. Yet the wars of 1935 and 1941 showed that the mission converts were as patriotic as other Christians. It was probably the knowledge that Ethiopians had not themselves shown any conscious missionary energy that had induced the government to release the Christianizing and civilizing influences of the foreign missionaries upon the vast backward masses of their pagan subjects.

In religion, indeed, more than in other aspects of national life, the Ethiopians are torn between their intense nationalism and conservatism on the one hand and on the other by the recognition, which the Emperor may, perhaps, share with his more thoughtful and knowledgeable assistants, that even in her religious life Ethiopia needs the influence and stimulus from the civilized nations. To judge by past experience, most of the Protestant missionaries will work for Ethiopia in the spirit of fraternity, seeking to strengthen and enrich the Christian life there rather than to capture converts from its church, though some of them may not have great hope for its spiritual development.

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[1] The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan where this principle is followed is not, of course, a British dependency. The system would only work where peoples were fairly static.

Here it may be encouraging to refer again to those tendencies towards toleration which, inspired largely by the Emperor himself, act as cross-currents to the prevailing conservatism and exclusiveness. They inspire the hope that those missionaries who work in a spirit of altruism and equality with Ethiopians will, like Europeans in other spheres, earn a response of trust and co-operation.

During the period in which this book has been written there have been, in this matter of religion, some striking evidences of tolerance and brotherhood which would not have been possible twenty years ago. Among these may be mentioned the religious observances which solemnized the great days of the war. Upon these occasions something like joint services were held. On 'D' day the *Ichegé* and rows of priests attended the same service as the British and prayers were read in Amharic and in English. On 'VE' day priests of the Ethiopian, Anglican, and Greek churches joined in leading a service on the steps of Saint George's Church, while on 'VJ' day a similar collaboration took place, this time *inside* Trinity Church. We may remark that the Greek Orthodox church which for a long period has counted many Greek adherents in Ethiopia, sometimes makes gestures of friendship towards the Ethiopian Church. On the 2nd of July 1944 the metropolitan of the Greek Church in Ethiopia presented the *Ichegé* with a pectoral cross as a symbol of the feelings of fraternity and admiration felt among the Orthodox towards the Ethiopian Church.

Ethiopian toleration is not confined to Christians; the Emperor, in his treatment of the Muslim community has set an example which is doubtless of political as well as ethical value and which contrasts with that once followed in not dissimilar conditions in Spain. Among other acts he has made it his custom to mark the end of the fast of Ramadan by receiving in state the leaders of the Muslim community. Seven guns were fired to salute the occasion; the Muslim leaders asked for more land to enlarge their Mosque, and congratulating the country on the possession of such a ruler, quoted to him his own words: 'Religion is the private affair of human beings, but it does not prevent us from being one people.'[1]

THE GENERAL PROSPECT

It will be extremely interesting to see what kind of relationship will be developed with the Coptic Church upon the new basis. Certainly the progress of the ancient church of Ethiopia will be watched with the deepest sympathy by all Christians in England who have any knowledge of the country. The Emperor's plans for reform represent a unique experiment in history. Here is a church which, at least in northern Ethiopia, has the medieval unity and universality and penetrates the domestic life and public institutions of the country at every point. Its existence, as a result of most unusual forces of history and geography, has been prolonged into this material and scientific age in which, over most of Christendom, active and confessing Christians are small divided minorities, though as such their religious life may have gained in devotion and spirituality. Now the attempt will be made in Ethiopia to infuse this all-pervading church with a higher spiritual life. It may not be altogether a loss if the church, as a result of the complaisance of many of the clergy towards the Italian conquerors, has lost some of its former political influence and self-confidence.

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[1] *Herald*, 22 September 1945. It is significant that there were Muslim members of the Ethiopian delegation to the Peace Conference in Paris in 1946.

It is clear that the Emperor and the religious leaders have before them a wonderful opportunity. One reason for failure to grasp this opportunity might be their giving way to the temptation, which must be very strong at this period of Ethiopian history, to increase still further the subjection of the church to the state. Another reason would be a jealous and undiscerning attitude towards those Christians of other lands and churches who desire to establish fruitful relationship with the Ethiopian Church. There seems enough evidence, even as briefly presented here, to justify the hope that the barrier between western Christianity and the monophysite church may not be so complete as stated in the hard saying quoted earlier in this chapter. That is a matter upon which very few, even in Ethiopia, can be qualified to prophesy. Christians of other countries can only hope and pray that as Ethiopia, a new nation in many ways for all her great age, comes out upon the international scene, her old Christian beliefs and virtues may keep her from the worst excesses of modern nationalism and materialism.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LAW AND JUSTICE

HISTORICAL AND GENERAL

Ethiopia still awaits comprehensive investigation of her law and custom. Some of the ground has been covered, especially by Italian writers, but owing to the great variety of law and custom amongst the peoples of the empire, these studies cannot be regarded as valid for the whole country, and generalizations must be made in tentative fashion. It would be best, following the usual plan of this book, to consider first the general situation in this sphere, both historically and at the time of the Italian conquest, and then to review the latest developments as far as they can be discovered.

The law of Ethiopia, both from its accumulation through a long period of time and from its variety over a wide space inhabited by very varying societies, had become, by 1935, a very rich legal amalgam.

We have seen that the culture of Ethiopia proper was first formed by the imposition of Semitic influences from Arabia upon the existing Hamitic groups and an Italian scholar, who is one of our chief authorities upon Ethiopian law, has even endeavoured to disentangle these two main strands in the existing legal pattern.[1] He admits, however, that this fascinating inquiry can be attempted only in very speculative terms, especially in view of our inadequate knowledge of pre-Islamic law in south Arabia. Upon this substratum were placed succeeding layers of influence—Jewish, Greco-Roman, Coptic Christian, Muslim, and, as the latest contribution, western European.

Until the Emperor issued a code of law in 1930, the most authoritative legal document in Ethiopia was the book known as the *Fetha Nagast*, which was probably introduced into Ethiopia in the seventeenth century. It was a compilation of the thirteenth century, put together by a Coptic churchman in Egypt from a number of sources including the Pentateuch, Roman law, the New Testament, the Canons—some of them apocryphal—of the eastern church, and the proceedings of the early councils, such as those of Nicaea and Antioch. Finally, since the compiler lived under the rule of the Caliphs, he also borrowed from Mohammedan law of the Cairo school. Much of the collection treats of ecclesiastical law and discipline, and some of it, being intended for Christians living under Muslim rule, is irrelevant to Ethiopian conditions. Drawn up mainly as a guide to judges, for which purpose it has some great merits, it is not a code of ecclesiastical and secular law though it was often treated as such in the higher courts of Ethiopia.

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[1] Conti Rossini, C. *Principi di diritto consuetudinario dell' Eritrea*, Rome, 1916, pp. 30 ff.

It is still more unsatisfactory for the function assigned to it because it was, until recently, available only in a very defective, seventeenth-century translation into the dead language of Ge'ez, which few clerks and still fewer provincial judges were sufficiently learned to interpret.[1] The custom, as observed by Plowden in the middle of the nineteenth century, was to open it at a venture and see what judgment could be deduced from the first passage to be found in this way.[2] It was in tribute to the reverence which is still given to it that the Emperor described the new criminal code he issued in 1930 as a revision of the older book, and this is still carried ceremonially into the highest court, that of the *Afa Negus*, or mouthpiece of the king.[3] But by the time of Haile Selassié's accession it does not appear to have been much consulted outside the ecclesiastical and the higher secular courts; the lower courts made use of customary law.[4]

Ethiopian law could also be made by the decree of the *Negusa Nagast.* References are made to such decrees by travellers from the time of Alvarez and examples concerning land will be given later. We are told, for example, of a law of 1554 which forbade marriage to a sister-in-law. Among other later decrees are the large number issued by Theodore, to which reference has been made. There is little evidence as to how far such laws were known and obeyed in the country at large; the resistance of the very heterogeneous customary law must have made such central promulgations inoperative over a wide sphere of subjects.[5] Moreover, the continuous and rational use of legislation as an instrument of government is a mark of constitutional maturity; in Ethiopia it belongs to the period since Menelik, and especially to the reign of the present Emperor. An examination of decrees and proclamations, which were often issued in a simple and hortatory form, show that after 1917 the number tended to increase year by year. Most of them referred to minor matters of order, sanitation, motor traffic and municipal dues and could have been relevant only to Addis Ababa and the two or three other large towns. Among the decrees of serious importance to the people as a whole were those dealing with slavery; declaring the new constitution; defining judicial procedure; suppressing unpaid purveyance; fixing certain land-taxes, and the important measure of May 1935, which substituted the payment of money for forced labour.

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[1] Rossini, pp. 30 ff. See also the work of other Italian scholars upon Ethiopian law and justice, especially Guidi, I. *Il 'Fetha Nagast' o 'Legislazione dei Re'*, Rome, 1899, p. 1 ff., Cerulli, E., 'Il nuovo codice penale etiopico', *Oriente Moderno*, vol. 12, No. 8, pp. 392 ff., and de Castro.

[2] Hotten, p. 120.

[3] Sandford, p. 80.

[4] Gardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[5] Rossini, pp. 50–1.

By the provisions of the constitution, as we have seen, laws were to be passed in future by the Emperor and both houses of parliament. It is uncertain exactly how far parliament's legislative powers were used; the Emperor certainly continued to issue decrees upon his own authority. It must be emphasized again that though the first period of the Emperor's reign was marked by important decrees of reform in the judicial sphere, there is little evidence as to how far, in the absence of administrative control from the centre, they were implemented, especially in the more remote provinces.

The constitution (chapter iii, articles 18 to 29), lists the obligations and the rights of citizens, some of which are of legal interest. The obligations are to give loyalty and obedience to the Emperor and to pay taxes. The rights are as follows: To have equal opportunity to enter the public services and to be free from arrest, imprisonment, domiciliary search, violation of the secrecy of correspondence and deprivation of property, except according to the law. There is also the right to demand trial in a legally established court. The powers of the Emperor, however, in war and emergency are not to be limited by these articles.

CRIMINAL LAW

A new criminal code was drawn up by the Emperor in 1930 but does not seem to have been distributed until 1932.[1] In order not to offend conservative, and especially religious, opinion, references are made in it to the *Fetha Nagast*, and the code follows, generally, the section and chapter headings of the old book.[2] It is stated in the preamble that the new code is a mere clarification and revision of damages and punishments, 'according to the increase of man's knowledge and according to the improvement of the conditions of his existence'.[1] Another more daring reason given for issuing the code is that the people 'by learning European practice may attain to a higher degree of knowledge, because the basis of our code of laws in many places fits in with the European code'. The code is long, and it is most interesting as the spontaneous attempt of an independent African ruler to deal with many of the same difficult problems that meet European governments of African territories in adjusting tribal law to modern conditions. There is no space here to do more than remark upon one or two interesting features. To attempt more would require very intimate knowledge of Ethiopian law and custom.

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[1] An undated translation of the code by the Rev. A. F. Matthew was printed after the restoration by the Army Printing Services in Addis Ababa under the title *Abyssinian Criminal Code and Decrees relating to Loans, Arms and Slavery*, and references, under the abbreviated title *Penal Code*, are to the pages of this book.

[2] Cerulli, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

It is emphasized in the preamble that the judges who have hitherto judged only according to the injury which is apparent to the eye, and have left it to the government to decide the appropriate penalty, are now to be assisted to punish 'the extent of the wrong according to the amount of understanding'. Elaborate guidance is given for assessing the degree of culpability in human motives, and for this the code draws upon the authority of the legendary Three Hundred Saints of the *Fetha Nagast* and also upon the command of Christ that he who knows much shall be punished much and he who knows little shall be punished little. Ten degrees of culpability are defined with their mathematically declining degrees of punishment, beginning with the man who knows the law and passing through the forgetful man, the countryman, the monk, the poor ignorant man, the stranger, the ignorant woman, the imbecile or invalid man, the non-Amharic-speaking subject and, lastly, the child under twelve.[2] The penultimate case is interesting, even though the indulgence was to last for only three years from the edict, as showing consideration in the sphere of law for the subject people. Another interesting piece of classification would demand considerable psychological powers on the part of the judge. It is an analysis of the different types of wrongdoers and includes persons who are oppressive, lawless, proud, envious, treacherous, revengeful, intemperate, quarrelsome, careless or bullying. The character of each is defined, sometimes with scriptural illustrations. Maximum penalties are carefully graded through these ten categories. This, however, is not all. The judge must then decide to which of ten other categories, depending on status and ranging from private individual to ras, the offender belongs.[3]

One somewhat surprising feature of Ethiopian law is the little attention it gives to witchcraft. In this code the offence appears only in two or three unimportant clauses. It might have been expected that it would have presented, in the pagan provinces at least, as serious a problem as it does in much of British Africa. The contrast shown here between Hamitic and negro cultures has already been remarked.

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[1] *Penal Code*, p. 3. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 14–22.

CUSTOMARY AND CIVIL LAW

Codes and legislation played little part in composing the civil laws of Ethiopia which arose mostly from ancient and often local custom. The numbers of tribes absorbed or conquered at different times, and composed of different ethnic groups and of three religions, Christian, Mohammedan, and pagan, made for a wide variety. It must be remembered that even the so-called Amhara provinces are by no means homogeneous, as they contain the more backward, earlier inhabitants such as the Agaus and Waito. It has therefore been said that Ethiopians seldom know the customs outside their own districts.

Research has as yet thrown little light upon the obscure and variegated pattern of Ethiopian customary law. Rossini, however, describes, with especial reference to the northern region of Simen, how this custom was revised from time to time by the spontaneous action of the people themselves. For the more intimate subjects this was done within their clans, and for questions raising larger relationships, by the representatives of clans. The old customs and proceedings were explained by the elders and fully discussed, after which they were reaffirmed or revised in the form of pacts. This allowed for local variations such as, for example, were found in Tigré where, though young children remained with the mother in case of divorce, the exact age at which this allotment was made was fixed differently among different groups.[1] Thus local assemblies in which the hereditary land owners had the chief voice could act as subordinate bodies for the making as well as the administration of the law. Pacts of this kind, covering a number of subjects such as land laws, loans, and even penalties for crime, might be drawn up between neighbouring tribes and deposited in a church, so that they took on the character of regional codes. This close homespun texture of tribal custom was not easily affected by edicts from Addis Ababa or by governors, many of whom were temporary agents from other provinces and who were content to recognize local custom and the local institutions for its application.[2]

Yet in one sphere of civil law there was an attempt to impose modern methods from the centre. This was made necessary, especially in the cities, by the contacts with European economic influences. In 1923 Ras Tafari, as Regent, issued what was called the law of loans. This covered contracts and sales. It is interesting to notice that Ethiopian Christianity did not condemn the payment of interest, but that it was fixed in this law at a maximum of nine per cent, a figure which was later raised to twelve. Side by side with the modern innovations in this sphere ancient customs still survived, and one much remarked by travellers was that by which a man who was unable to pay a debt was chained by the wrist to his creditor, who took him round to inquire whether his relatives would pay what was due. A creditor might even be seen carrying out his daily duties thus burdened with his debtor.

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[1] Rossini, pp. 60 ff.

[2] Certain aspects of land law will be considered in the chapters on the provinces and especially upon pp. 277–292.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Lord Hailey has written that in Africa to-day procedure and machinery are matters of greater interest to the people than legal principle.[1] Fortunately, since the former subject is perhaps the more important for this short description of the government of the country, information about the Ethiopian judicial system is somewhat more accessible than that about the law itself.

The system, for it well merits that name, showed two contrasting features. It was at once very democratic and highly centralized. It was democratic in that most Ethiopians, who are deeply interested in litigation, acted a vigorous part in it. Indeed, it was said that to play at litigation was a favourite amusement,[2] while D'Abbadie credited the Ethiopians with remarkable critical faculties and a great knowledge of law, and said that they regarded injustice as the worst of enemies.[3] It was liberal also in that natives and strangers had some choice as to their court and full rights of appeal. These rights were, indeed, excessive, since it has been estimated that in some parts of the empire it was possible to take appeals through fifteen courts and much weight was given to whether or not the litigant received a favourable verdict from a majority of these courts.

Litigation at its lowest stages was a voluntary and spontaneous form of arbitration. Parties in civil and even minor criminal disputes would call upon a passer-by to decide the issue between them under a tree. These informal roadside courts might last for hours to the deep interest of the spectators, and many travellers have described this characteristic Ethiopian scene. Judges thus conscripted were expected to accept their duties since to assist in the administration of justice was, according to D'Abbadie, as much a civic obligation as military service. They were generally offered a small fee for their services. Plowden called litigation the favourite sport of young men and children. It was in recording his approval of the roadside arbitration that he asserted, 'I cannot believe that the nation practising it merits no better name than savage.'[1] In a comment upon this devotion to litigation Wylde remarks, 'The legal profession is at a discount in Abyssinia as every man is his own lawyer.'[2] Even the Italians were constrained to admit that the humblest Ethiopian seemed able to speak well in court.[3]

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[1] Hailey, Lord, *An African Survey*, 1938, p. 280.

[2] de Castro, vol. 1, pp. 305–6.

[3] Abbadie, Arnaud d', *Douze ans dans la Haute-Ethiopie*, Paris, 1868, p. 103.

If the arbitration resulted in a decision accepted by the parties that was the end of the matter though there was only the pressure of public opinion to enforce the settlement. This must have been strong to make the method work at all.

If there was no decision at this stage, or if one of the litigants desired it, the parties, with the judge and witnesses, would go to the lowest official court. Various accounts are given of this court for different periods and areas. The lowest official judge would be the *chiqa shum*, who corresponds to the village head elsewhere in Africa, or, more often in the towns, he might be a special functionary, the *danya*, a man knowing the law. Such cases would take place with the help of guarantors who play a great part in Ethiopian, as in early Anglo Saxon, procedure, and who went 'bail' for the parties agreeing to accept the penalties in case of their escape. Assessors, whose function appeared to correspond somewhat with that of a jury, were also used. The taking of oaths was a very important part of the procedure. It was common, too, for litigants to make in addition to the material stake which might be at issue a wager, some part of which might go to the judge.

The next court, and the original court for more important and especially for criminal, cases, was that of the *Malkanya*, or governor's deputy in the district. According to an important decree of 1931, these officials were to be appointed by the governor. They must be 'honest men and sympathetic to the poor' with knowledge of the law. They were to take the legal oath upon their appointment, to keep court clerks and ushers and to see that all cases were recorded in a court register. They must choose two assessors from those in the court, while the litigants each chose a guarantor. On appeal the case went, with a copy of the record signed by all concerned, to the governor, who could hear the appeal himself, or to his judges, the *wombars*, with four assessors.

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[1] Hotten, pp. 137 and 187.

[2] Wylde, p. 310.

[3] *Gli Annali dell' Africa Italiana*, Rome, 1940, *Anno III*, vol. i, p. 729.

Alvarez also describes the system as he saw it working in the provinces in 1520. The *Bahr-nagash*, for example, had a judge—even then called a *Malkanya*—always in readiness at his court to take cases: this officer settled some cases himself but reported all important cases to his master for judgement. The Emperor had a judicial agent present at all hearings to ensure the litigant's right of appeal and Alvarez asserts that this dualism ran right through the courts of the great lords and also of their subordinates.[1] Wylde gives a full account of the court held in 1896 by Ras Mangasha of Tigré.[2]

Appeal from the governor lay to the central court at Addis Ababa. There were in the capital men known as *Wombar-Rases*, judges appointed to represent each of the provinces and to help in dealing with their appeals. This central court used the services of four assessors and two guarantors. The next appeal was to the court of the *Afa Negus* (the Mouth of the King). The *Afa Negus* would take the case with the help of judges from the court below.

The appeal then went to the Emperor himself. This was his duty from the earliest times of which we have evidence. We have a full picture of the Emperor's court as it was at the end of the middle ages from Alvarez. In the moving capital there was a long tent of justice, close to the Emperor's tent, and from respect to the Emperor and his justice each man must dismount before passing between these tents. Within the tent of justice were thirteen chairs, six on each side, and one for the chief justice in the middle though the judges actually sat on the ground beside them. 'The plaintiff brings his action and says as much as he pleases without anyone speaking and the accused answers and says as much as he pleases.' After further question and answer between them a recorder repeats all that has been said and gives his own verdict. Each judge, rising in turn, does the same, the chief justice speaking last. There may then be a delay for bringing any proof that may be required. Finally the judges go to the Emperor's tent, speaking to him through the curtains, and return with his decision.[3]

In the late eighteenth century we have from Bruce a full account of the Emperor who, even at this time of the decline of his powers, is still the supreme judge. Having already told us how the Emperor sat shut up in a kind of latticed box when presiding over his council,[4] he goes on to describe the procedure at a trial, where an interpreter acts for the invisible king. 'According to the circumstances of the time, the king goes with the majority, or not; and if, upon a division, there is a majority against him, he often punishes the majority on the other side, by sending them to prison for voting against his sentiments. For though it is understood, by calling of the meeting, that the majority is to determine the eligibility of the measure the king, by his prerogative, supersedes any majority on the other side, and so far, I suppose, has been an encroachment on the original constitution.'[1]

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[1] Alvarez, p. 64.

[2] Wylde, pp. 308–10. See also p. 170.

[3] Alvarez, pp. 333–5.

[4] Bruce, vol. 3, p. 265.

A full and very interesting account of the trial of a high dignitary of the church, for treason in excommunicating the Emperor, is also given by Bruce. He describes how this man was arraigned by the official accuser and given time to prepare and to speak his own defence. The judges rose each time the interpreter brought the Emperor's words, and at the end each judge gave his verdict of guilty, after which the Emperor gave the final verdict. The prisoner was immediately hanged.[2]

In theory the Emperor never gave capital sentences for first offences unless for a peculiarly horrible offence such as patricide, and the life and general merits of the individual prisoner were weighed against his immediate guilt.[3] In fact, however, Bruce describes a horrible régime of bloody revenge, immediate execution and ingenious tortures. Six judges always attended the king in the field to deal with rebels on the spot.[4]

We have, unfortunately, no such excellent accounts of the royal justice for subsequent periods. De Castro, however, gives us some account of the supreme court of Menelik's day sitting to take appeals on Wednesdays and Fridays. The flight of steps in front of the palace was turned into an open-air forensic hall; many coloured eastern carpets were spread out; the judges sat at the top and the chiefs, soldiers, and servants at the wings; the fourth side was closed by the accused, the witnesses and the advocates. Behind these was the throng of the curious public. In the absence of the Emperor, the *Afa Negus* would preside.[5]

Coming to Haile Selassié's day we find that the usual procedure was for the *Afa Negus* to make a concise report of the case to the Emperor. According to the 1930 criminal code the Emperor alone could sentence to death, though in Menelik's day some provincial governors still had capital powers and it is possible that some of the more powerful rases continued to use them up to 1935. The present Emperor put aside two days a week for his judicial duties. Thus it was true to say that from the earliest times until 1935 an appeal lay from the humblest peasant to the Emperor himself, and only the expense and the long distances prevented his legal duties becoming an impossible burden. Tradition required that the Emperor should be accessible to all. Bruce tells us how he was deafened by the shouts for justice that resounded about the king's house in Gondar, though some of these clamourers told him that they were doing it only for the king's honour, lest he should feel lonely![1] Many other more recent observers have pictured the hardy insistence of litigants in approaching the Emperor, especially when he was on tour. Wellby, for instance, records how, as Menelik marched to war, the villagers approached him, stripped to the waist and crying for justice.[2] Even in the nineteen-thirties it was difficult for the present Emperor to disregard public opinion on this matter and to delegate this exacting task entirely to a court of appeal over which he did not normally reside in person. It is reported that, since his return, as the Emperor is driven in his motor car, men fling themselves before it to draw attention to their wrongs.

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[1] *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 275.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 73–77.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 282.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 283.

[5] de Castro, vol. 2, pp. 131–2.

Before leaving the question of the legal system and procedure we may notice that, whatever hard things may have been said about the *Fetha Nagast*, its influence on the administration of justice was mostly good. In the section upon 'judge and witnesses' it laid down a number of the most excellent maxims with regard to the conduct of litigation, the purity of the bench and the publicity of proceedings. A judge, it rules, should be impartial and is not to have compassion, 'for in judgement there is no compassion'. He is not to be corrupted or to accept gifts from him who is judged. Favours as to precedence are not to be made in judgement, but each must wait his turn. Since the peaceful settling of disputes is desired by the Holy Books, the judge, before giving judgement, should attempt to make peace between the parties. There are many other maxims covering the use of oaths and of witnesses and the courteous and equal treatment of litigants.[3]

Punishments were fines and imprisonment, death, flogging, banishment and, especially for habitual thieves, mutilation of a hand or foot or both. It would be unprofitable to generalize about the degree of cruelty in Ethiopian punishments as compared with those of other nations. Bruce, in the late eighteenth century, in spite of his generally happy and friendly relationship with Ethiopians, was horrified at the appalling cruelty and wholesale nature of the punishments inflicted upon rebels; he remonstrated strongly with the Emperor and he gives his disgust at this cruelty as his reason for hastening to leave the country. His visit, however, coincided with a period of civil wars and general demoralization, and though other examples are recorded of cruel punishments and mutilations, the records of the country contain many stories of acts of mercy, especially on the part of rulers towards rebellious subjects.

[1] Bruce, vol. 3, pp. 273–4. [2] Wellby, p. 79. [3] de Castro, vol. 2, pp. 184 ff.

De Castro records that Menelik, though just, was severe in his application of the cruel punishments and did not hesitate to order the recidivist thief's hand to be cut off or the slanderer's tongue to be cut out. He once had the tongue of an advocate cut out because in defending his client too well he spoke ill of the government.[1]

The present Emperor, whose public acts have been marked by a high standard of humanity, disapproved the use of mutilation, and it is noticeable that in the criminal code mutilation hardly figures as a punishment.[2] Even the continuance of flogging was decreed in apologetic terms.[3] Murder was regarded, except for crimes of public significance, as a matter between the families concerned and could be commuted for blood-money at rates differing in the various provinces. This custom was endorsed in the penal code of 1930. The relatives of the dead could, according to the Mosaic tradition of the 'lex talionis', demand the death sentence, which they had the right to carry out themselves in the same way as the murder and with the same weapon, and it was regarded as showing a certain nobility to choose vengeance rather than money. Doctor Mérab gives descriptions of the scenes to which these executions, which took place in public in Addis Ababa, could give rise,[4] though later residents in the capital have questioned their frequency. In 1925 the Emperor, then Regent, deprived them of some of their horror by an ingenious device. A building was set aside in which the condemned man was strapped to a plank in such a way that the sights of four fixed rifles were directed upon his heart. By touching a special mechanism the relative could fire the four rifles at once.[5]

The principle of compensation ran through all bodily injuries, of which a long and detailed list, which makes gruesome reading, is given in the penal code. One of the chapter headings runs, 'The law of the punishment of a criminal who wilfully causes serious injury and the damages he shall pay'. For such wilful injury the maximum punishment is three years or, if it were intended beforehand, five years. Two examples are then given to show how much damages should be paid, according to the amount the victim was earning: 'if a man destroys both the eyes of a man' or 'if a man cut off both hands of a hired workman'. Moreover, if two people fight, even, it appears, if one acts in self-defence, and both are injured, 'damages are cancelled and there is no punishment'.[6] It is clear that the idea that crimes committed by one subject against another are offences against the King's peace was only just forming when this code was put together.

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[1] de Castro, vol. 1, p. 165.

[2] *Penal Code*, p. 28.

[3] *Penal Code*, p. 8, para. 3.

[4] Mérab, P., *Impressions d'Ethiopie*, vol. 3, Paris, 1929, pp. 218 ff.

[5] *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 220 note.

[6] *Penal Code*, pp. 52–3.

It was in keeping with this stage of development that the use of prison as a punishment was not fully developed. The reliance was upon quick corporal punishment, flogging or mutilation, or damages. There were prisons, however, though it appears that prisoners had to rely upon being fed by their relatives. Even in Addis Ababa the two jails were notorious, the prisoners being in a horrible condition of filth, neglect, and disease, which led to the prison being cleared at intervals by typhus. The Emperor had built a modern prison but, owing to his determination, which has been mentioned before, to decide every detail for himself, the opening was long delayed and in the end its first inmates were the political prisoners seized by the Italians.[1] It is a comment upon Ethiopian prisons that a special section to safeguard British prisoners had to be added to the agreement of 1944.

There is no doubt that the present Emperor is intensely humane. It is said that to-day he finds the confirmation of death sentences his most painful duty and sometimes hesitates so long over it that in the end the criminal is reprieved. It was he who, as Regent, transferred the public hangings from trees, which in earlier days were one of the grimmest sights of the capital, to a place within four walls. In the hope of deterring the lawless, public executions have from time to time been carried out, since the restoration, in the market and on the race-course. It even seems that there may have been an increase in such public executions for political and criminal offences. Public floggings take place in the markets of the larger towns.

An Ethiopian institution worthy of note was the *afarsata*, by which, when a crime was committed, all the inhabitants of the locality were collected and confined in an enclosure until the guilty person was discovered. In a description of the *afarsata* in Harar the French travellers, Azaïs and Chambard, say that 4,000 or 5,000 people might be rounded up before twenty elders who would thus address them, 'Until you have discovered the culprit, infants at the breast shall not suck milk, oxen and herds shall neither drink nor eat; husbands and wives shall not inhabit their houses.' Everyone had to swear his innocence and his ignorance, and the oaths were registered in writing.[2] Fines were levied upon those who failed to attend, or payments demanded for permission to go, and the *afarsata* might thus be an important source of revenue. Sometimes the local population might be confined for ten or fifteen days. In 1933 the Emperor issued a decree which modified the severity of the *afarsata*, limiting the days, the hours when it could take place, and the distance the people had to travel. In this as in other instances it is impossible to say how far the decree was effective in the short period remaining before the Italian conquest. It is worth recording that the Italians found this method of detection so effective that they retained it. The discovery of crime by means of divination through youths who were treated with a drug was common among the Gallas and was still practised even in Shoa.

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[1] Sandford, pp. 85–6.

[2] Azaïs, R. P. and Chambard, R., *Cinq années de recherches archéologiques en Ethiopie*, Paris, 1931, pp. 69–70.

Parallel with the secular courts were the ecclesiastical courts, which tried charges against and between priests, disputes about church property, heresy, and divorce. The common avoidance by laymen of the religious form of marriage meant that few divorce cases came to these courts, as they were generally settled unofficially with the help of those who had witnessed the customary marriage. Appeal from the lower ecclesiastical courts was to a higher ecclesiastic or to the prior of a monastery, above that to the Abuna, and finally, it seems, to the Emperor. It must not be forgotten that some important religious authorities, even in the capital, had rights of secular jurisdiction; though their extent varied at different periods owing to the varying power of the Emperor who, in theory, was supreme in all causes, religious and secular. Mention should also be made of the courts set up at large markets, where a *Malkanya*, a *danya*, and the *Nagadras* (chief officer of the market) sitting together in a little booth, would deal out summary justice in cases arising in the market.[1]

It will be seen from this account that Ethiopia can boast an ancient and highly developed system of law and justice, and the cruelty of the punishments should not blind us to the advancement of the system. Before leaving this review of Ethiopian justice it might be well to quote the opinion of de Castro, a man who was deeply interested in the question of justice and who in 1915 wrote of the country with a scholarly detachment that became progressively more unusual for Italians as this century advanced. He gave it as his view that theft was rare and attempts on the person much rarer than might be expected; that theft and highway robbery were much less frequent than in Europe, while duelling did not exist. He considered that this was due to the rough and rapid justice and to the use of a code of law that was entirely suitable to the nature of the society.[2]

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[1] de Castro, vol. 1, pp. 210–11, and vol. 2, p. 131.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 165–6.

THE POSITION OF FOREIGNERS

The legislation affecting foreigners raised delicate problems. The diplomatic representatives never admitted the right of the Emperor to pass laws affecting foreigners without their prior approval. They invoked the so-called Klobukowski treaty of 1906, an agreement made between the Emperor and the French, certain clauses of which were designed to protect French subjects from the application of Ethiopian legislation and subjection to the Ethiopian courts. Custom had extended the protection afforded by a somewhat obscure clause in this treaty to other nationalities, and a quasi-capitulatory régime had grown up which the Ethiopian Government tolerated in theory but sometimes obstructed in practice.

According to this arrangement a court known as the Special Court, in which the consul concerned sat with an Ethiopian judge as president, tried cases between Ethiopians and foreigners according to the law of the defendant. Appeals from judgements given in this court were supposed to be heard by the Emperor's court, in which the consul of the parties involved was invited to attend as an observer. Beyond this court there was no appeal except through diplomatic action by the legation of the aggrieved party. Cases between members of the same foreign nationality went to the court of their consul. By 1935 there were ten of these consular courts in operation.[1] As there was a large colony of coloured British merchants, the British consul had to give much time to judicial duties.

The application of the terms of this treaty was frequently the subject of dispute, and agreement on the principles of its application was never reached. Haile Selassié, upon his accession as Emperor, refused to hear appeals from this court and parties were obliged to let their cases drop. It was said that even before the Italian war, the Emperor, in order to end this deadlock and assert the dignity of his government, intended to set up a court in which Ethiopian and European judges, the latter recruited from Europe and paid by the Ethiopian Government, would exercise jurisdiction.

As late as 1934 there was a severe clash between the Emperor and the diplomatic body upon two issues. One was whether Ethiopian laws should apply to foreigners without their consent. The other was as to whether a clause in the Klobukowski treaty exempted foreigners from Ethiopian jurisdiction only where the parties were private and not, as the Emperor claimed, when the Ethiopian Government was involved.

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[1] Gardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

THE ITALIAN OCCUPATION

Little need be recorded under this heading. The Italians came in with the declared intention of sweeping away the old Ethiopian system, the condemnation of which had been one of the excuses for their conquest. On the 1st of June 1936 a new code of law was issued. Laws in force in Eritrea were to apply to the newly defined province of Amhara and to the capital; those in force in Somalia were to be extended to the new provinces of Harar and Galla-Sidamo. Special courts were set up for Italians.

By this law all the higher structure of the old judicial system disappeared. Criminal courts became, in effect, Italian, the grading of courts running from those of the Italian resident to the governor. In civil matters the customary law of Muslims and Copts was recognized, and at the lower level the native civil courts, those of the *kadis*, the *danyas*, and *wombars*, were still allowed to function under control, their procedures being greatly accelerated.[1] Italian books upon the Fascist achievements in Ethiopia are almost entirely propagandist in spirit and matter, but it is worth recording they show special pride in recounting the introduction of Italian justice into a barbarous country while at the same time they assert that native custom was tolerated wherever possible.

An interesting feature of the Italian régime was the extremely strong and open effort to retain, by means of severe laws, what was called racial purity. Intermarriage or cohabitation between Italians and natives was forbidden under severe penalties, which, it need hardly be said, did not achieve their aim. Objective observers amongst the allied armies reported strikingly full and open evidence of the truth of this, especially in Addis Ababa. Indeed, the Italians were obliged to issue, in addition to their racial purity laws, another measure to insure that half-caste children were absorbed into the native population and not given equality with the Italians or, as in some French colonies, a special status. Severe penalties were imposed upon Italians who did not conduct themselves properly and upon natives who did not pay Italians proper respect. In the capital the policy was to segregate the two races and to form a native quarter.[2]

It is believed that the Duke of Aosta was an admirer of British colonial methods and intended to infuse his administration with the principles of 'indirect rule'. It is said, indeed, that the Duke had to fight against a determination in Rome to place an Italian judge in every Ethiopian village.[1] It is interesting, especially in view of the work done by Italians upon Ethiopian law, that so little constructive administration appears to have been attempted in this field. Baron Quaranta in his 1939 survey of Italian administration, to which reference has already been made, has nothing to record about law and the legal system.

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[1] *G.A.A.I., Anno III*, vol. 1, pp. 725 ff.

[2] Francolini, F., *Bianchi e Neri in Africa*, Florence, 1944, pp. 310 ff.

THE ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN AGREEMENTS, 1942 AND 1944[2]

With the re-conquest of Ethiopia by the British armies a modified form of military government, set up in agreement with the Emperor, was introduced in each province as it was retaken. On the 5th of May 1941 the Emperor re-entered his capital and negotiations were shortly afterwards begun leading up to the agreement of 1942.

On the legal side the Ethiopian negotiators were determined not to restore anything approaching the rather unsatisfactory arrangements which covered foreigners before the conquest. As in other matters which affected their sovereignty they showed themselves very determined, and it was in order to avoid any solution resembling capitulation that the Emperor went a very long way to meet the wishes of the British and the needs of foreigners in the character and staffing of his courts. The new system is laid down partly in article 2 (iii) of the agreement of 1942, by which the Emperor agrees to employ British subjects as judges and magistrates, and partly in article 5 which, while claiming the right of Ethiopian courts to try foreigners, agrees that this jurisdiction shall be carried out according to an annex to the main agreement laying down the constitution and powers of the courts. Article 5 also lays down that any foreigner may elect to have his case tried in the High Court without additional fee; that in cases in which a foreigner is a party one of the British judges shall be a member of the High Court and that foreigners shall be incarcerated only in prisons approved for the purpose by the British Commissioner of Police. Their terrible condition by European standards made this last provision necessary. Overcrowding, utter lack of sanitation, chaining, flogging, epidemics, and long imprisonment without trial appear to be still common conditions in provincial prisons.

Before considering the judicial annex, we should remark that the Ethiopian penal code does not, and, indeed, could not, apply to foreigners. It is believed that attempts have been made to draw up a new code, but none has yet been issued. In default of a new code the Italian criminal code has been applied.

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[1] From a conversation with the Duke after his capture, as reported to the writer.

[2] Cmd. 6334/1942; Cmd. 6584/1945. See appendices D and E.

The annex to the agreement is nothing less than the systematization of the judiciary, and it was enacted, word for word, in proclamation 2 of 1942[1] which, under the Anglo-Ethiopian agreement of 1944, has been confirmed. This law (part i) sets up the following courts—

The Supreme Imperial Court.
The High Court,
The Provincial Courts,
Regional and Communal Courts.

The Supreme Court is purely appellate in its jurisdiction for appeals coming from the High Court as a court of first instance. We may notice that the attendance of the Emperor is now formally dispensed with. In practice the people still come to the Emperor with their cases when he is on tour in the provinces and still bring complaints against his courts to him at the capital. On these occasions they are given a special form at the Ministry of Justice and this goes to the president of the High Court; the *Afa Negus* is president of the Supreme Court, and there are to be two judges of the High Court, nominated by its president, for hearing appeals from that court. It should be remembered that the president at the time of this enactment was British: he still is though there is no longer an obligation under the 1944 agreement that this should continue.

The High Court was to comprise such judges as the Emperor shall think necessary, including one designated by the president. 'The High Court shall contain such number of judges of British Nationality as We shall consider desirable.' (Part iii, 4.) This court was to have full criminal and civil jurisdiction and to sit anywhere in the empire. No sentence of death might be executed unless confirmed by the Emperor.

The provincial courts (part iv) were to be staffed by judges appointed by the Emperor, with appeal to the High Court. Their competence was restricted to imposing imprisonment up to five years, fines of $2,000 (£200) and lashes up to twenty-five, and concerning civil cases up to $2,000. Under decree No. 1 of 1942, article 10[2], (the important law setting up the provincial administration), the governor-general, himself appointed by the Emperor, was made president of the provincial court, but three other judges were to be appointed to sit with him. In his judicial capacity the governor-general was placed under the Minister of Justice. Thus the high degree of autonomy which the more important of the old rases enjoyed in running their courts has been brought to an end. This applies also to their appointment of subordinates with judicial powers: all these were now to be made from the centre.

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[1] Administration of Justice Proclamation, No. 2 of 1942. See appendix D for full text as given in the annex to the 1942 agreement.

[2] Administrative Regulations.

Under part v regional and communal courts were to be set up by warrant. This allowed for the recognition and systematization of the large numbers of subordinate courts in the provinces. As these warrants have not been issued in the *Gazette* it is not possible to give their numbers and powers. In the law setting up the provincial administration the courts, if at towns where governors reside, are put under their presidency and called *wereda* courts. Below these come the courts of the *Mislané*, the governor's deputy. Appeals lie from the lower courts to the regional courts.

Part vi allowed for the appointment of assessors who might give opinions which should not be binding on the court. Part viii set up a consultative committee for legislation consisting of the judicial adviser, the president of the High Court, and three persons of long judicial experience. This committee was to draft and review laws and to signify to the Emperor whenever a law was submitted to him that it 'is not repugnant to natural justice and humanity and is a fit and proper law to be applied without discrimination to Ethiopians and foreigners alike'. This provision was reinforced by a final declaration 'that no Court shall give effect to any existing law that is repugnant to natural justice and humanity or which makes harsh or inequitable differentiation between Our subjects and foreigners'. (Part viii, 24.)

In October 1943 there were issued in the *Gazette*, as legal notice 33 of 1943, the rules of court procedure. Though they were formally enacted at this date, they had in fact been in use from the opening of the High Court in May 1942. These rules were comprehensive and were mainly along the lines of British procedure. They allowed the entry of advocates into court, and provided for the institution and conduct of suits; the execution of sentences; the summoning of witnesses and the hearing of appeals. A table of fees was drawn up for civil cases ranging upwards on a sliding scale from half a dollar (1s.) for suits concerning less than $20. Instructions were drawn up for the recording of pleas and all other proceedings, and the issue of writs, summonses, warrants, etc., according to specified forms. By one of the most important provisions in these rules (part xvii, 93) it was made permissible for any person, in civil or criminal cases, to have his case transferred, without additional charge, to the High Court from any lower court. This rather surprising permission would seem to weaken the status of the lower courts. It may have been dictated by some lack of confidence in their efficiency, especially perhaps where important or educated litigants were concerned, or as a means of still further enhancing the position of the central High Court. These rules, we may note, were issued over the names of Charles Mathew, the British acting president of the High Court, and the Ethiopian Vice-Minister of Justice.

Other laws of importance in building up the new judicial system were the Public Security proclamation (No. 4 of 1942) setting up a system of police, a large task for such a huge area; the proclamation (No. 29 of 1942) appointing a prosecutor and deputy for the High Court; the Courts (Advocates) Rules legal notice (No. 49 of 1944) establishing a register of advocates and a disciplinary committee for their regulation.

The Kadis' and Naibas' Councils proclamation (No. 62 of 1944) repealing an earlier, but almost exactly similar, law, provided for Muslims by setting up *Kadis*' and *Naibas*' councils with jurisdiction over questions regarding Mohammedan marriage, divorce, guardianship, succession and *Wakf* gifts. Appeal was to lie from the *Naibas*' to the *Kadis*' council and thence to a court of *Shariat*, consisting of not less than three judges nominated by the Minister of Justice. The decision of this court was final. Thus in matters of Muslim civil law there was a self-contained system which was not under the High Court. It is interesting to note that in his speech at the re-opening of parliament in 1942 the Emperor said: 'When We established *Kadis*' Courts by law We did it in order to achieve national unity.'[1]

Considering this reformed system of justice as a whole, the influence of the British judicial adviser and judges is evident but it is no less evident that the Ethiopian Government has willingly used their advice.[2] It is, indeed, a most interesting example of the readiness of the Ethiopians, once their status and freedom of control are fully recognized, to borrow freely from the experience of another country. The compelling motive here was the determination to prove that capitulations were superfluous. In fulfilment of the agreement the Emperor appointed before the end of 1942 three British judges and a British magistrate. He also appointed ten Ethiopian judges, and with these numbers the High Court was able to sit in three divisions. By 1944 some twenty-one High Court judges had been appointed, three of them British, the rest Ethiopian; of the latter roughly half were men of the old school and half younger men with some modern education.

At a first view it would seem doubtful whether such a very advanced judicial system could be suddenly superimposed upon the medieval structure which has been described, or whether British and Ethiopian judges, so different, it must be supposed, in training and temperament, could work together harmoniously when brought into such abrupt and intimate partnership. All the evidence available shows that both the legal synthesis and the human partnership has worked extremely well in the High Court. Ethiopian law has been found on the whole to accord well with British conceptions, and the co-operation between the two sets of judges has been, as far as information can be obtained, excellent. It should, for example, be recorded that in the High Court which, like the provincial courts, was constituted by three judges giving judgement according to a majority vote, there was no case during the first few years in which any British judge found himself in a minority. It has not been possible to obtain evidence for the latest period.

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[1] Abyssinia Association, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

[2] Brigadier Willan, of the Colonial Legal Service, was the first president of the High Court, 1942–3. Brigadier Willan was followed by Mr. Charles Mathew, who has since resigned and has been succeeded by another British judge, Mr. A. Thavenot.

Sitting at first continuously in the capital, the new High Court worked hard during the first year of its existence to deal with the very large arrears of criminal cases. At first it was impossible for the Court to go on circuit, but by the end of 1944 it appears that the Court had reached most provincial centres. It is planned for the High Court to visit each province twice every year. The lack of prosecutors and qualified advocates led to the judges often having to act as prosecutors and defendants as well as judges, but this is a not uncommon situation in parts of British Africa. Certainly no difficulties have arisen from any irreconcilable rift of ideas between British and Ethiopian judges either in matters of law or of procedure. It appears that the new court, which sat in three divisions and was open to the public, was very popular. The people seemed to have no fear of appealing and a large number of cases were against rases and other dignataries. Proceedings have been in Amharic, the legal language for all courts; and when a British judge was present the need for interpretation into English has slowed up the conduct of cases.

What has been described here is the enactment and inauguration of a new or at last radically reformed judicial system though not a new system of law. In certain directions, as far as can be learned, a very good start has been made. But that the new principles and procedure are completely understood and followed throughout the empire could hardly be expected. In the provinces especially the system demands much of both judges and the lower ranks of the judicial service which they cannot yet be ready to give. So long, however, as there is reforming pressure from the Emperor, and, for a time at least, expert guidance, the good start may be maintained and the ancient, and in many ways impressive, achievement of the old Ethiopia in the sphere of law and justice may be brought gradually into conformity with an advanced, modern, and centralized system.

There is, however, one big question that will have to be answered. Will it be possible in the conditions of Ethiopia, which, in spite of all the new institutions, seem to demand some continuing measure of paternal autocracy, for the judiciary to become truly independent? The Emperor has withdrawn from the Supreme Court, but there is a secret court in which he sits or which he controls—for very little is known about it—which deals with matters of state or of high administrative importance. It is not for a moment suggested that this court is grossly oppressive, still less cruel. Its action generally seems to be that of banishing politically undesirable people to remote places where they live under surveillance, a method which, let it be admitted, is still found necessary in some British dependencies. In 1944 it was believed that this court had been abolished, but, if that were so, it appears to have come to life again. It may be that the Ethiopians, in conformity with the traditions and needs of the country, are willing to accept the existence of an imperial court of this kind, a Star Chamber, able to deal, above all, with disaffection in high places. If the need for such a court can be proved there would seem to be good reason, when all other parts of the constitution are being defined and integrated, to bring this court too, in the open. Otherwise it may weaken the conduct and reputation of the judicial system as a whole.

There is another side to the question of the independence of the judiciary. In addition to this secret court, it is said there has sometimes appeared a tendency upon the part of the executive to interfere with the judiciary and it has not always been possible to carry out the decrees of the courts in the face of executive obstruction. It is said that some of the ministers have set a bad example by their resistance to judgements of court which affected their departments.

It may seem that it is asking too much of Ethiopia, with her history and her recent great difficulties, to act already according to the highest principle of an independent judiciary, which is the mark of very mature and civilized states. On the other hand, in this sphere of government, Ethiopia is obliged to set her own standards very high. It must be remembered that in the agreement of 1942, in the negotiations for which the question of capitulations is known to have played an important part, the British withdrew their own proposals. They did this in view of the reform of the judiciary and, especially, of the arrangements by which, as we have seen, the Emperor agreed to appoint British judges to the High Court, coupled with the other provisions which insured that foreigners, if they wished, could always have a British judge upon the bench. In the agreement of 1944 these engagements were modified. The new judicial article (No. 4) enacts that: 'there shall be substituted for "judges of British nationality" the words "judges of proven judicial experience in other lands" and (*b*) that, in the hearing by the High Court of any matter, all persons shall have the right to demand that one of the judges sitting shall have had judicial experience in other lands.'[1]

This is, of course, a very important modification of the former agreement. It leaves the Emperor free to dispense, if he wishes, with the service of any British or other European judges. It is believed that he is very unlikely to do this—there is still at the time of writing a British judge though not a British judicial adviser—and it is probable that the British negotiators were wise to make this further act of recognition of Ethiopia's full sovereignty. But it is also a great act of faith in the competence and integrity of Ethiopian courts. If this faith should at any time appear to have been misplaced, Ethiopia might find that foreigners and foreign enterprises of high standing would tend, much to her own loss to avoid the country.

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[1] See below, p. 429.

CHAPTER NINE

THE ARMY

HISTORICAL AND GENERAL

The army must take a major place in any description of Ethiopia, because it is the third element in a three-sided polity, the monarchical and ecclesiastical components of which have already been discussed. The primacy of the Emperor, his relations with his chiefs, their functions in the provinces and their bonds with the people in them, were all built up out of their military powers and obligations. Nearly all important government posts had a military origin, and it is only with the penetration of European ideas that purely civil offices have begun to assume higher importance. The Ethiopians were before everything soldiers and their highest ambitions were military.

In military matters the Emperor was—though sometimes only in theory—supreme. He was the leader of his armies in the field, and his rases and most of his other agents held their posts as officers under his command. The present Emperor had not, before his flight in 1936, been able to fulfil his people's traditional conception of an outstanding military leader in the field, in the tradition of Theodore, John, and Menelik, though he had shown gifts which were, perhaps, more suited to their modern needs. But his great personal courage in the Italian war and his campaign alongside the patriots in 1940 added military leadership and valour to his list of kingly qualities.

It is difficult to generalize confidently about forces which varied somewhat in character from time to time and from province to province. A tentative description may, however, be given of the army as it was in the decades before 1935, and indeed for centuries before this date. The greater part of the Ethiopian army was raised by the provincial governors. It was their obligation to arm their contingents and to lead them into battle at the Emperor's call. In the northern Amhara provinces the governor's troops might be composed of several different types of soldiers. There would be his own personal and permanent following, living in or around his headquarters and counting, by Ethiopian standards, as professional soldiers. The security and rewards to be gained by close attachment to a great man would be the attraction to this service, a privilege that had to be won by bravery or some other merit. Then there would be the men called in to do service under the chief for two or three months during the year. Little or no military training, even in rifle fire, seems to have been given these men, though Cheesman tells us of some warlike exercises on horseback at Ras Hailu's headquarters in 1926.[1] Wellby confirms this lack of training, adding that, though some exercises might be carried out on the way to battle, it was possible to get the Ethiopian to turn out to *fight*, but not before.[2] 'Regular' soldiers obtained exemption from certain taxes and from forced labour, and for this reason there was a limit to the number a governor could afford to call up in this way.

The obligation was attached to the land so that if a woman inherited she had to arrange for the service to be rendered. The men thus levied would probably be mobilized for lesser wars, such as those against rebellious rases. A ruler's power depended largely upon the number of more or less 'regular' soldiers of this kind he could maintain. Clearly their maintenance in a country of subsistence economy was a serious problem. One reason for Menelik's southern conquests was his need to open up fresh lands on which to quarter his growing armies of hungry men who were pressing hardly upon the resources of Shoa.[3] During some of these lean periods in the nineties Menelik found the cattle seized from the Galla and Somali herds a very valuable asset for his soldiers and people. It is interesting, too, to read that after the Emperor John had despoiled Gojjam so that its *Negus*, Takla Haimanot, could no longer support his own army there, Menelik proposed to him that he should invade Kaffa in order to provide for his soldiers.[4]

Thirdly there would be the mass levy in time of emergency. In theory every man owed this service in return for the use of his land. In practice it was regarded as sufficient if one member of a household presented himself. There were numerous exemptions, such as those for the many priests and monks, while others could be bought by merchants, musicians and the few other professional men. It seems that in Menelik's day the

[1] Cheesman, R. E., *Lake Tana and the Blue Nile*, 1936, p. 34–5.

[2] Wellby, *op. cit.*, pp. 47–8 and 84–6.

[3] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 1, p. 324, note 11.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 306 and note 11. The pious author in recording this suggestion by Menelik that another country should be ravaged to support this army, quotes a proverb that was coined for the occasion: 'The king had pity upon his army and God upon his creatures.'

more recently subjugated Gallas and the negroid and Sidamo peoples were not called upon to fight. The needs of cultivation and the lack of sufficient rifles and ammunition were also limiting factors, although, as regards the last, even during the Italian invasion large numbers of men armed only with swords and shields are described as parading past the Emperor. Indeed, though firearms had been known from the sixteenth century, the old weapons of sword and spear were still carried with the shield even by men who possessed a rifle; the unreliability of these rifles and the shortage of ammunition made this necessary. The cavalry, mostly provided by the Gallas, was a highly important part of the army because of its dash and speed. A French officer describes how the horsemen would drop their bridles and fight with both hands in a charge.[1] Uniform was very rarely provided and the men wore the ordinary shirt, trousers, and *shamma* of the country. Military decorations were sometimes shown by strips of gold and silver round the scabbard of the sword.

When soldiers were sent away on duty or mobilized for war, they were instructed to provide themselves with food for a requisite number of weeks and to find their way to a certain rendezvous by a certain date. The soldier's ration was flour, dried peas and beans, butter and red pepper for his curry and perhaps a flask of mead. There was no transport. Soldiers on the march might be seen followed by one or two baggage mules piled with food, accompanied by their *gabars*[2] and slaves and perhaps also by a slave woman carrying part of the equipment. A small chief would have a larger number of mules, servants and slaves, and would even take oxen and goats along with him.

We have a vivid account of the speed with which the mass levy could be made. The governor's messenger would arrive on a spent horse and call everyone in a village to arms. Within five minutes other men would have come out with fresh horses and have galloped off in all directions with copies of the proclamation. Thus a call to arms would be known within a radius of 150 miles and over a distance of 300 miles in twenty-four hours. The men called would borrow food from each other; their wives would quickly bake a bread that would keep well, and fetch dried meat from the store; a cow-horn would be filled with red pepper and another with butter. 'In an incredibly short time the soldier was ready to start, his horse having been fetched from the water meadow and saddled and a *shamma*, knife for grass cutting, and his provisions tied in a goat or sheep-skin were fastened on his saddle. The rifle was taken from the wall, the cartridge belts round the waist and over the left shoulder put on, and the sword girt to the right side, and, with a sheep-skin over the shoulders, the man was off to the market green to see if he was first unit on parade, ready to take the field.'[1]

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[1] Coulbeaux, vol. 1, p. 27.

[2] Labour tenants.

By the sanction of custom, soldiers on the march ruthlessly took all that they could from the inhabitants in order to save their own supplies. Many European travellers, from the earliest to the latest days, have remarked upon the arrogant and extortionate behaviour of the soldiers. Cattle, mules and donkeys trampled down and ate the crops. Despite the present Emperor's orders, it is doubtful if even in the Italian war payment was always offered for food so requisitioned. But woe betide those same soldiers if they returned defeated! For then the people whom they had despoiled would turn on them and take their revenge for the injuries they had suffered. It might almost be said that every large-scale campaign in Ethiopia had some of the features of a civil war.

Tellez wrote that famine was a common occurrence because of the locusts or of 'the marchings of the soldiers, from one country to another, which is a worse plague than the locusts, because they only devour what they find in the fields, whereas the others spare not what is laid up in the houses.'[2] In the middle of the last century Plowden reported that 'A constant enmity exists between the military and the population in general' and 'the country people slay remorselessly all fugitives of either side from a field of battle.'[3]

There was a natural tendency for these levies to melt away after two or three months in the field. Their own food might be exhausted and the surrounding country stripped bare; they might have lost confidence in their chief, or they might wish to return to cultivate their land. Ethiopian military history, like that of European medieval powers, exemplifies this kind of desertion frequently. In the battle of Aduwa, as we have seen, the Ethiopian armies very nearly dissolved on the eve of battle for lack of supplies, the Tigreans having prudently sent most of their cattle away into Eritrea in order to cheat the Shoan hunger.

Once the main host of the Emperor was on the way, for all the seeming disorder, to European eyes, of the vast human flood, confusion in the ranks was almost impossible. Each corps of the army represented a region following its traditional leader, and its component groups were related to each other by ties of neighbourhood which existed before mobilization.[4] Each man knew his place upon the march and when the host encamped.

The more professional soldiers who had perhaps lost their chief or their lands or had developed a taste for living upon other people's labour, would roam the country after a campaign, taking service where they could or living a life of semi-brigandage. These swelled the ranks of the outlaw bandits known as *shiftas*. On the other hand, soldiering might be a quick and legitimate path to advancement, and the officer whose company distinguished itself in war might win the favour of his governor, or even of the Emperor, and be given a title and lands. Many examples of such careers might be given, and the Emperor Theodore himself rose from being a soldier of fortune, indeed, practically a brigand.

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[1] Wylde, pp. 285–6. [2] Tellez, p. 34. [3] Hotten, pp. 145 and 146.

[4] de Castro, *L'Etiopia*, Milan, 1936, vol. 1, p. 335.

It is, indeed, impossible to sum up in terms that are too strong the attraction of the military life for the Ethiopians. It meant the escape from the drudgery of farm-work and the dullness of village life; it held out hopes of loot and advancement. The humblest villager once he was armed and mounted on his sorry nag, with even one ragged squire trotting at his side, had become a real man on the road to fortune and adventure. 'A common soldier', said Plowden, who had lived and fought with these people, 'with a good reputation for courage is everywhere respected; he is flattered and caressed by many chiefs, who all strive to secure his services; his name is sung in ballads and he considers himself with reason the equal to the proudest in the land.'[1] Another Englishman, who also went out with the Ethiopian armies nearly a century later shows that this way to honour was still open. It had been taken by many of those who surrounded Menelik or Haile Selassié or who lorded it in the provinces and who had risen through their profession of arms. 'The Ethiopian system was not', he says, 'a feudal system: it was a toughman system. . . . There was one order to which all Ethiopians responded at once; that of the *tillik sau*, the great man. He inflicted often the most terrible punishments; he commanded his followers to face the most fearful risks; he fed them on the most astounding amount of bullocks and mead. His word, his whips, his generosity, the unquestioned objects of his intrigue, were the sole law for them. . . . The people obeyed him. That was the basis of Ethiopian defence.'[2]

THE IMPERIAL FORCES BEFORE 1935

The nucleus of the Ethiopian army, intended to be the spearhead of the national host, was composed of forces directly under the Emperor's control. The *Negusa Nagast* had always based his supreme authority upon a province and a strong provincial army of his own. The present Emperor drew his own army mainly from Harar, and he could also count upon the armies of his closest relations and supporters such as

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[1] Hotten, pp. 150–1.

[2] Steer, G. L., *Caesar in Abyssinia*, 1936, pp. 69 and 71.

Ras Kassa and his son-in-law, Ras Desta. The Crown Prince had his personal army in Wallo.

It was among his own troops that Menelik began the modernization of the army. He imported rifles from France. (We need not discuss here the long and intricate story of British attempts to hold the French to the various agreements that had been made to check the entry of arms into Africa.) In 1919 some Russian officers and some Ethiopians who had served in the King's African Rifles were appointed to train the troops. Later some young men were selected to be trained at Saint Cyr, and, as a result, the French military tradition became a strong influence among the few trained officers. The present Emperor, even when Regent, did what his resources permitted to introduce new methods and better weapons. His Imperial Guard numbered about 5,000 men, recruited in Addis Ababa and trained by a Belgian military mission, which was invited in 1929 and which remained until, at the outbreak of the Italian war, it was recalled by the Belgian Government. This force was composed of four battalions of infantry, a machine-gun company and a squadron of cavalry for ceremonial purposes. They were dressed in khaki and given a military band of freed negro slaves under a Swiss bandmaster. The officers wore caps adorned with lions' manes, a traditional decoration of the Ethiopian warrior.

In addition to the Imperial Guard were the Emperor's personal troops which were stationed in his province of Harar. In 1931 two Swiss officers were sent to work in this province and, later, additional Belgian officers were engaged to train and equip these men on the same lines as the Imperial Guard. They numbered about 10,000 men. A Swedish mission consisting of five officers came out in 1934 to open an Ethiopian 'Sandhurst' thirty miles outside the capital for the training of officer-cadets. This was done upon French lines, the cadets being passed out after sixteen months of training.[1] It will be seen how in this, as in other matters, the suspicions of the Ethiopians prevented them from relying upon any one nation for military advice and training even though, in this sphere above all others, the variety of methods and principles must have tended towards confusion and division.

Other sections of the army which might be regarded as having been under the direct control of the Emperor were the permanent garrisons in the many conquered provinces. These were composed partly of the relics of the troops which Menelik had drafted from his armies, and partly of additional troops formed sometimes out of the garrisons abandoned upon the death or dismissal of a governor, which had been added to them from time to time. These men were quartered upon the conquered people according to a system which will be described in the chapter upon provincial government. They lived a life of ease, exploiting the peasantry. Being rarely transferred, they settled down into their new surroundings, sometimes married local wives and were succeeded by their sons. These garrisons, though generally under the orders of the governor who brought also his own personal troops with him, were regarded as the Emperor's men. It need hardly be said that by 1935 they were no longer efficient soldiery.

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[1] Virgin, General, *The Abyssinia I Knew*, 1936, pp. 117 ff.

SIZE AND EFFICIENCY OF THE ARMY

It is almost impossible to say what was the size of the Ethiopian army when fully mobilized. This was partly because general mobilization was hardly ever ordered, and partly because it was difficult to distinguish between soldiers and camp-followers, some of whom might join in the fighting. If the total population were 8,000,000, considering the long period of life for which men were regarded as liable for service, it should have been possible to raise 1,000,000 men. Allowing, however, for clerical and other exemptions and for evasions and for militarily unproductive subject people, it seems that nothing approaching this number could be raised. An official British handbook of 1917 estimated the number as 500,000. Italian writers in the thirties naturally gave much attention to this question. Zoli, the governor of Eritrea, writing in 1930, said the Emperor could raise 50,000–60,000 men, and that a complete mass levy might produce from 200,000–250,000.[1] Badoglio estimated the northern army he had to meet at 200,000–250,000 and the southern at 80,000–100,000, but he would not be likely to underestimate its size.[2] De Bono gives much the same figures.[3] Mr. G. L. Steer, who inquired with some care into the question, gave a total of 250,000 as his estimate.[4] In their claim for damages against Italy put forward by the Ethiopian Government in 1945 one of the items was for $18 a head pay for 365,000 men.[5]

Numbers alone meant little when it came to fighting a modern, mechanized army accompanied by an air force and using gas as a method of terror. Steer estimated that only one fourth to one fifth of the Ethiopian soldiers, that is, some 60,000, had modern rifles. The machine-guns imported by the Emperor numbered a few thousand, but these were of various designs. There were a few anti-aircraft guns. Most of the army was equipped with old rifles, many of them Fusils Gras and Lebel rifles of Menelik's day. Ammunition was wholly inadequate for modern warfare. Although the Emperor had initiated a small aviation school at Addis Ababa under French direction in 1932, and a few landing grounds had been cleared, by the time of the Italian war it is estimated that the Ethiopian army possessed only about a dozen aeroplanes of which, perhaps, one half were fit for service. Equipment was limited by the poverty of the revenue, but it must be remembered that much responsibility in this matter lies upon the policy of some of the European nations, which, at the time of the Italian crisis, denied arms to Ethiopia.[1] Britain broke her treaty obligations in refusing licences for the export of arms. The Ethiopian claim against Italy was for over £7,000,000 for arms, equipment and clothing of troops, and £9,125,000 for food and medical supplies, etc.[2]

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[1] Zoli, *op. cit.*, pp. 57 ff. He gives a detailed analysis of the various types of soldiery and their pay.

[2] Badoglio, P., *The War in Abyssinia*, 1937, p. 8.

[3] de Bono, *op. cit.*, pp. 195–6.

[4] Steer, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

[5] *Memoranda presented by the Imperial Ethiopian Government to the Council of Foreign Ministers in London*, 1945, p. 26.

It was not, however, only in equipment that the Ethiopian army was inadequate for its great test in 1935. It was caught in a dangerous moment of transition between medieval and modern methods. The leavening of newly trained and armed men at the top was insignificant in relation to the size of the army. It is possible that, aiming at a modern strategy, the trained officers may have undermined the self-confidence of the old commanders and confused the orders given to them. The old traditions demanded massed frontal attacks by the advance guard, and guerilla warfare and the taking of cover were regarded as unworthy of Ethiopian warriors. Nothing could better have suited the Italian invaders, who were indeed given more trouble by geography than by their enemies.[3] Badoglio writes of the 'unreasoning offensive spirit' of the Ethiopian soldiers, and concludes that 'the war was won with ease'.[4]

Another reason for the speed with which, contrary to most anticipations, the Ethiopians were defeated was the long peace which had prevailed since Menelik's day. The outbursts of rebellion and civil war in the interval had given insufficient exercise to an army whose only training was war itself. The hardy veterans of Menelik's fighting days had grown old or died. Many of the military chiefs found it more profitable not to keep their contingents up to strength, and the rot of easy living and idleness had eaten into the leadership of the once-famous Ethiopian armies. There was a common belief that they had never yet been defeated, since there was a tendency to drop any distasteful facts of history from their chronicles and from their minds. The memory of the victory at Aduwa, above all, had given most Ethiopians, though not the well-informed Emperor, a wholly false confidence in their military power. That victory had been due to the state-craft of Menelik in achieving a rare condition of unity which, in turn, had resulted in his control of a great preponderance of forces. It was due also to his resolution as a leader, and to the Ethiopian knowledge both of the terrain of the battle-field and of their enemies' movements and forces. It was not due to any great superiority in the art of war. The hordes of ill-armed, untrained levies who in 1935 paraded before the Emperor shouting and posturing according to the traditional boasting of troops before battle, were in no condition to meet the army of Mussolini with its overwhelming superiority of modern weapons. No doubt the Italian use of poison-gas added to the terror inspired by their more legitimate arms, if such a word can be applied at all in relation to this aggression.

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[1] Sabelli, D., in *Storia di Abissinia*, Rome 1938, vol. 4, p. 161, gives a total of 900,000 rifles of all kinds, 1,700 machine-guns, 234 guns, 15 aeroplanes, 7 tanks and 24 armoured cars.

[2] *Ethiopian Memoranda* (1945), p. 26.

[3] Badoglio, *op. cit.*, pp. 61–70, and 170. He gives a full account of the Ethiopian forces and their commanders.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

In assessing the condition of the army before 1935 and the value of Haile Selassié's reforms, it must also be remembered that the army, like the church, tended because of its history and character to be a focus for conservatism. As Regent, the present Emperor had to struggle with the old commander and Minister of War, the *Fitaurari* Habta Giyorgis, who hated foreigners and foreign ideas and boasted he had never even seen the railway, much less ridden on it.[1] Later he had to co-operate with another man of the old school, Ras Mulugeta, who was Minister of War during the Italian invasion. This autocratic old warrior, then seventy years old, told the Emperor to banish every European man from his country and then, leaving his ministry, marched off to the war, holding a spear and surrounded by wild horsemen.[2] Most of the other generals in this war held their posts as grandees or provincial governors rather than as competent soldiers;[3] this was an essential part of the Ethiopian system, and the Emperor's introduction of foreign military experts, nearly all of whom stood out of the fighting, could not change the ancient traditions of the country in a few years.

THE ARMY SINCE THE RESTORATION

The stories of the amazingly rapid reconquest of Ethiopia by the armies of the British Commonwealth, of the daring preliminary penetration of the country by Brigadier Sandford and his famous '101' expedition; of the help given by the patriot forces and the Emperor's march from the Sudan border to his capital—all these belong to general history and not to a study of Ethiopian institutions.[1] The same applies to the British military administration, and the almost unavoidable political difficulties to which it gave rise, though something will be said of this in the concluding chapters. Here it is only necessary to trace, as far as any evidence is available, the rebuilding of the Ethiopian army since 1942 and the assistance given by the British in that process.

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[1] Rey, *op. cit.*, pp. 179–80.

[2] Steer, *op. cit.*, pp. 123 and 129.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 60–1.

The reconquest left Ethiopia in a confused position with regard to her armed forces. The patriot ranks had naturally been swelled as the fortunes of the Emperor rose, as new provinces were freed from Italian control and as deserters flocked in from the beaten armies. The Emperor knew that one thing above all was necessary if he were to reduce the country to order, establish his own authority and gain quickly a position in which he could dispense with British military support: he must have a reliable and efficient regular army.

By the agreement of 1942, although British military administration was brought to an end, the Emperor was obliged, in view of the large numbers of British troops in his country and the state of the world war, to accept clauses which gave the British armed forces wide powers of action, of control of their cantonments and of freedom of movement and immunity from Ethiopian jurisdiction. The details of these concessions will be found in the military convention which was annexed to the agreement[2] and something will be said later of the problems caused by these arrangements. The clause of special relevance to this chapter is article 2, by which the British Government agreed to provide at their own cost a military mission 'for the purpose of raising, organizing, and training the Ethiopian Army'. The duties of the mission were to be the subject of instructions from the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in East Africa, drawn up in agreement with the Emperor. The mission was to be retained until the Emperor no longer needed its services or until the British forces withdrew, whichever was the earlier. The British Government promised to help the Emperor to find suitable officers to replace any members of the mission who should not remain in the country. The army trained by the mission was to be armed and equipped with booty taken from the Italians.

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[1] Several accounts of these operations have already been written. See especially the popular official account, *The Abyssinian Campaigns*, with magnificent maps and illustrations, issued by the Ministry of Information for the War Office in 1942. See also Steer, *Sealed and Delivered*, 1942, and Allen, W. E. D., *Guerilla War in Abyssinia*, 1943. Mrs. Sandford gives a lively account of the war, especially of her husband's operations. For the official dispatches by Lord Wavell and Sir Alan Cunningham see *Operations in East Africa* (Supplement to the *London Gazette*, 10 July 1946).

[2] Cmd. 6334/1942.

This training had in fact already begun long before the agreement was signed. A training centre for Ethiopian officers under Lieutenant-Colonel Athill had been formed at Khartoum at the end of 1940. Its graduates included the Emperor's two eldest sons and many young notables, some of whom took over important posts at the restoration. Other officers were trained in the actual course of the operations en route for the capital. Shortly after the occupation of the country by British forces Major-General Butler, with a handful of British officers and non-commissioned officers, set to work on the organization and training of the new army. The British personnel, which seldom exceeded six to a battalion, was considerably less than the numbers generally used in the training and command of British African units. The 'new model' made rapid progress, thanks to the enthusiasm and intelligence of the Ethiopians. They were ready to go into action before the campaign in the country was over and they fought with great success and courage in the battle of Gondar.[1]

The mission, its status established by the agreement and a Major-General with a miniature divisional staff placed in command, set to work to raise, clothe, train, feed and transport ten battalions of infantry. To the infantry were added a regiment of pack artillery, an armoured car regiment and engineer and signal services. These last proved very valuable, as they provided a network of communications which were of use for more than military purposes. It was necessary to have directorates of stores, ordnance supply, transport, pay and records and a medical service. (This last service did all it could, as we shall see later, to help the civil population.) Great importance was attached to mobility and twenty-five men in each company were—according to plan but not always in practice—mounted on mules. The training, as with all modern armies, covered much more than mere military exercises; in the servicing of workshops, the engineering, the building of their own quarters, and in the medical service the Ethiopians were learning many new skills which they could later carry into civil life. The Imperial Military Training Centre, the origin of which has been described, became and remained an important and interesting part of the mission. It ceased to be a purely officer-producing unit, and its scope was gradually extended to cover all forms of military instruction.

That the army trained by the mission was not merely an educational institution was shown by the careful disposition of its units. Battalions were stationed at key points in the six provinces of Bagemdir, Tigré,

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[1] 'An Army from Scratch', *Sudan Herald*, 25th and 26th August 1942.

Gojjam, Harar, Sidamo and Jimma and astride the so-called north road. This posting was not, of course, static; but represents the general disposition during the first four years of the mission's existence.

It need hardly be said that this army under British officers was not the only one. Even had it been of adequate size the Emperor, in such a vital matter, would never have dispensed with an army absolutely under his own control. This seemed to him the more necessary as although he could, of course, order the mission army to undertake any operations he desired, the members of the mission itself could only join in these operations with the express sanction of the G.O.C., East African Command, while the British Government was bound to prevent its soldiers fighting, and perhaps dying, in operations in which it had no interest, or of which it even disapproved. The actual position that would have arisen if, in a crisis for the Emperor, such a prohibition were to be issued, naturally undermined the Emperor's confidence in this army as a force available for immediate fighting. He therefore revived the Imperial Guard, which was organized upon entirely different lines by officers who had imbibed the French military technique. This army had no connection with that of the mission; it wore a different uniform, did not join with the other in field exercises and seems to have been independent even of the Minister of War, the famous Ras Ababa Aregai, who had preserved his resistance forces unbeaten up to the time of the reconquest. The officers were mostly men of good birth and education, determined to show what Ethiopians could do without foreign help. It appears, however, that more lately a Swedish general has been put in command.

There was still another army in the country. It may be imagined from what has been said earlier in this chapter about the military customs of Ethiopia that during the reconquest large numbers of bands took to arms under local leaders and went out fighting and looting all over the country, which was, of course, strewn with weapons by the fleeing Italian forces. It was necessary, if possible, to collect and control these bands and to prevent too many of them making the easy transformation into *shiftas*, or brigands. This was the policy behind the new territorial army. An interesting rule of this army was that men, instead of being given rifles upon recruitment, were in principle only enlisted if they already had rifles. The relatively large army which resulted from this procedure was useful for the negative reasons that it checked unofficial brigandage and unemployment, but it was not to be expected that it should be a highly disciplined and well-trained force.

To complete the picture, it must be remembered that below these three armies there was still the potential force of the national levy to which all males, except the priests, are liable; there has been no need to call this out since the restoration except upon one occasion in Harar during 1942.

It is a credit to all concerned, and especially perhaps to the head of the mission, that there was no serious friction between these armies. The Ministry of War was supposed to be in charge of all, but, as the minister was in the old tradition of the trusted war-hero instead of being one of the new, educated men capable of the large task of office administration required, the ministry did not assert its control to any great extent. It is not surprising that the Emperor's retention of personal control over matters of prime importance was at its highest with regard to the army. Public finance will be treated later, but attention must be drawn here to the vast cost of these complex armed forces in relation to the restricted revenues of 1942–3 and 1943–4, in spite of the fact that the mission, consisting when at full strength of about 100 officers and 150 other ranks, was paid for by the British Government.

In the middle of 1943 Major-General A. E. Cottam was appointed head of the Mission, and it is no secret that his tact and friendliness did much to win the confidence of the Emperor and his advisers. This was necessary as, in addition to his natural fears, the Emperor could have complained that although many of the officers were of the highest standard, there were others who were less well chosen. The mission was actually asked to take over the training of a group of officers from the territorial army. Lieutenant-Colonel Athill was in charge of this side of the training, and although many of the men were veterans, to whom a new military training must have seemed superfluous, the experiment was a great success and still further improved the attitude towards the mission. It was no doubt partly as a result of this improvement that in the agreement of 1944 the period of the mission was renewed, though in terms which were very carefully composed in order to bring the mission more closely under Ethiopian control. In article VI, 3, it was provided that the head of the mission should be responsible to the Minister of War 'for the organization, training and administration of the Ethiopian Army'. Clauses 4 and 5 of the article state that the policy governing the training and organization and the general disposition of the troops shall be the subject of agreement between the Minister of War and the head of the mission. This article of the agreement might be concluded with three months' notice upon either side. In a long annexure to the agreement detailed arrangements are made as to the exact degree of immunity of the members of the mission from Ethiopian jurisdiction, their liability to taxation and other matters of the greatest interest to a government highly sensitive on questions of sovereignty.

Following the new agreement, the links between the forces became closer. The presence of a certain number of territorial officers in all officer-training courses developed into a matter of routine. In 1945 the Ethiopian Government showed further confidence by handing over eleven battalions to the mission which, therefore, had twenty-one battalions in training. But during the years since its inception and as the main object of its existence, the mission had been transferring command by stages into Ethiopian hands. Whereas at first there had been five British officers to a battalion, the number had dropped later to three, and later still, in some battalions, to one. The territorial battalions retained their Ethiopian commanders, British officers being attached to them as advisers. It was planned that by 1947, if possible, the whole responsibility should be taken over by Ethiopians. The function of the mission, if it were retained, would then be to provide advisers to groups of battalions and instructors in staff work and to the technical services. The policy appears to be to reduce the territorial army by incorporating it into the regular army until the former disappears.[1] In so far as the territorial army represents the tradition of the old provincial armies under the governors, this would add still further to the strength of the Emperor's centralized authority.

It is probable that the degree of co-operation attained in this difficult sphere of military training was due not only to the personal acceptability of the head of the mission and some of his colleagues but also to the actual success of the training as demonstrated in action. There will be more to say of this fighting in the chapters on the provinces, but it should be remarked here that in one or two actions, and above all in the severe fighting of the Tigré rebellion of 1943, the troops trained by the mission were outstanding in their military conduct and also in the testing duty of armed patrols.

British officers give a good account of the Ethiopian as a soldier. To those who know Ethiopian history they have nothing new to tell of his bravery or of his phenomenal endurance on the march. He has been called 'an ideal soldier. He is completely fearless; he has tremendous keeeness . . . in military matters like weapon drill or smartness on the square he is indefatigable.' There seem to be two views about Ethiopian discipline: one British officer of great experience—and perhaps of great powers of understanding and leadership—informed the writer, to quote his own words, that 'I found the Ethiopians extraordinarily ready to accept discipline. I found their chief difficulty lay in understanding the "chain of complaint" by which the private complains to the corporal, the corporal to the sergeant and so on. The Ethiopian private likes to fling himself without intermediaries before the imperial car. Otherwise, I think, he is easy to discipline.' Not all views are so favourable, but clearly much depends upon the sympathy and the standards of the officer; not all can master the difficult art of training and leading men of a widely different community.

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[1] Sandford, p. 123.

The same differences of view appear with regard to sanitation and cleanliness. Some are critical, while others defend their soldiers, except with regard to married quarters. There was, however, none of the difficulty that had been anticipated in inducing the soldiers to part with their wild mops of hair in order to fit their heads under the neat green beret with its rosette in the Ethiopian colours, which was at first part of the uniform. There is, indeed, great pride in the uniform in spite of a tendency to make various decorative additions to it.

In the official dispatches on the campaign of 1941 are some interesting expert comments upon the Ethiopian leadership and military quarters. It is clear that the generals in the warfare in central Ethiopia gave the palm to the wonderful fighting qualities and steadiness of the Sudanese. Of the Ethiopians Sir William Platt has much to say of the ineffectiveness and perpetual internal jealousies of the patriot chiefs. He remarks that the 'patriot chiefs did not take kindly to the idea of releasing men from their own forces and so weakening themselves in order to increase the Imperial Bodyguard'.[1] Later he remarks that about April 1941 'a striking characteristic of the patriot irregulars came into evidence. Unwilling to sacrifice themselves when the issue of the war was in doubt and providing nothing more concrete than a camouflage to the small number of our forces, from henceforth to the fall of Addis Ababa they risked themselves more and more in open battle'. In a three-day battle in May they showed 'a new reckless courage'.[2] These remarks should check the growth of a myth that the Ethiopians gave immediate and united support to the British force sent to Gojjam. Officers on that campaign complain of a very slow and difficult start. This is not surprising and it is necessary to emphasize it only in contradiction of some exaggerated accounts of the patriot movement.

General Sir Alan Cunningham gives his own conclusions drawn from the southern front. 'It was found that Patriots would fight with great courage and take great risks in certain circumstances, especially when following up a beaten enemy, but, as a rule, they were unsuccessful in direct attacks on fortified positions and disliked such actions. They were apt to be unreliable and difficult to control at night, and it was best to leave it to them to conduct such operations themselves. Finally, it was never safe to assume that a force of Patriots would take the field on two consecutive days at the same strength, owing to food difficulties, internal feuds and rivalries.' But he also remarks that 'with the progress of the campaign, certain patriot leaders displayed, more than once, powers of leadership which may well be employed in the future Ethiopian army.'[1]

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[1] Wavell, p. 3553.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 3556.

It is impossible to predict what future lies before the Ethiopian army because the future of all armies is in question. The courage and endurance of Ethiopian soldiers, and the readiness of the whole male population to go to war would allow, if sufficient training and modern equipment could be provided, of an army that would acquit itself infinitely better against the same kind of enemies as those who invaded the country in 1935. But it is unlikely that Ethiopia will ever be faced again with a campaign of that nature. It is more likely that the Emperor's purposes for his army are mainly centred, according to the tradition of the country, upon its functions as a support for the central government, a reserve police force, a school of unity and loyalty to the Emperor, and, to a lesser extent, as a means of pageantry and prestige. Of its importance for the first of these functions there can be no question. The Emperor's centralization of the armed forces and his control of modern weapons, including even a few aeroplanes for reconnaissance and bombing, reckoned in conjunction with the new means of communication, should lift him for the first time in Ethiopian history high above the level of *primus inter pares*. It is difficult to imagine, so long as the Emperor can retain even a partial hold upon the resources of the country and the loyalty of the hard, professional core of his army, that any provincial king or ras will ever successfully lead his own forces against those of the King of Kings.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 3579.

CHAPTER TEN

THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

PRODUCTION AND TRADE BEFORE 1935

We cannot discuss the financial organization of the Ethiopian Empire without some survey of the country's production and trade, and that, in its turn, must be prefaced by some economic generalizations. We must not, however, attempt to go beyond generalizations in these pages for this is not an economic study and, indeed, the materials for such a study are only just beginning to take shape.

Economically, by African standards, which are not very high, Ethiopia is a potentially rich and varied country.[1] She has, as we saw in the geographical introduction, an extensive area, covering about four times the size of Great Britain; a predominantly fertile soil; a good rainfall over large areas; and a wide range of altitude and temperatures. Relatively to other African territories she possesses a reasonably large and well-distributed population. With inhabitants, according to a rough calculation, at about twenty to the square mile, she has ample room for expansion. She can produce numerous types of grain, from the wheat which grows on the cool uplands to maize and millet and other tropical and semi-tropical grains in the lower altitudes. Cattle, mainly of the humped zebu type, and sheep and goats are reared in nearly all parts,[2] while the southern slopes present first-class terrain for coffee. Gold, platinum, and coal are present and prospecting may reveal further mineral riches.

It has been said that Ethiopia is potentially rich. The most obvious fact, for a country of this size and character, is the low standard of living and the low figures for trade, when compared with territories under European government. The price paid for retaining independence was, as with Liberia, economic backwardness. The research work, the education in better methods of production, the new cash crops, the transport systems, the full, organized contacts with the world markets which were available to the colonial territories were, for the most part, denied to the Ethiopians. Their links with the ancient civilized world had been enough to give them the plough—unknown in the rest of tropical Africa—though not the wheel, and their peasant agriculture is, in parts, highly skilled, when compared with the average standard of other tropical African peoples, though it may lag behind that of the most advanced. The plough to-day is a simple but effective wooden instrument pointed with iron and steel and drawn by two oxen. Crops are not usually intermingled as in negro Africa but the great preponderance of cereals makes a proper rotation difficult. The rainfall and fertility in some regions allow of three and even four crops in a year, but though manuring is not very common, terracing, irrigation, and contour-ploughing are skilfully carried out in some regions. Storage of fodder is practised only for equines, and the usual African conditions of shifting cultivation, soil-erosion, reckless destruction of timber, and uneconomic cattle are prevalent. The latter are used mainly for meat and the plough rather than for milk.

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[1] See geographical introduction above, pp. 5–9.

[2] According to the official Italian estimate the figures for domestic animals were as follows: cattle, 7,000,000; sheep and goats, about 18,000,000; horses, 1,600,000. *Guida dell' Africa Orientale Italiana*, Milan, 1938, p. 96.

Unlike most of tropical Africa, however, Ethiopia, as the historical introduction has shown, had trading contacts with the outside world from very ancient days. Her ruling class learnt to demand fine silks and velvets; her common people needed, above all, salt from outside to supplement local supplies, and payment could be made in gold (from the alluvial deposits of the western borders), in ivory, in musk (the product from the semi-domesticated civet cat), and in the skins of wild animals. By the late nineteenth century a small though fairly steady trade had developed in the cultivated coffee of Mocha type grown round Harar (which was captued only in 1887), and there was a trade also in the smaller coffee bean which grew wild in the southern lands conquered between 1880 and 1900.

The main routes throughout Ethiopian history ran from Aksum to the coast, first at Adulis and then at Massawa; through Sennar to the Sudan and Egypt—the route by which Bruce left the country—and from the south-east to the Danakil or Somali coast. These last routes, however, were very liable to the interruptions of Muslim hostility and tribal lawlessness. South and south-west lay the vast, unpenetrated stretches of savage Africa.

Ethiopia never became a great trading country. Her conditions, like those of medieval Spain, had exalted the warrior and the priest. Trade was despised and in any case, once the Muslims had come between Ethiopia and the civilized world, they naturally became the economic intermediaries. But they also penetrated the country and absorbed all but the petty trade in the interior. The rulers adopted towards them that ambivalent attitude common amongst European kings towards the Jews, scorn and hatred on religious and political grounds; partnership and dependence in economic matters. The records of many periods show us the Muslim groups in the main centres holding a secure and influential position and acting as links with the outer world. In the later centuries Greeks and Armenians played an important commercial role.

In the period before the Italian invasion much of the trade in the commercial centre of Addis Ababa was in the hands of British, Indian, and Arab firms. In 1944 the Chamber of Commerce in Addis Ababa, out of 215 members, numbered only 17 Ethiopians, while Greeks and Indians each numbered 66, Armenians 28, and Arabs 24. Many of the firms which have long operated in Ethiopia have their headquarters in Aden, which has been a commercial centre for much of the trade of the backward countries in its neighbourhood. These merchants have great experience in handling this trade. They were expelled by the Italians who learned their mistake before the end of their occupation. Since the restoration a certain jealousy of Aden has been shown by the Ethiopian officials who now handle commercial matters.

When, with the sudden economic development of Africa in the first twenty-five years of this century, the export and import figures of the other tropical territories traced steep outward graphs, those of Ethiopia remained almost static. It is true that the figures do show that the coming of the railway stimulated trade.[1] Yet it has been estimated that the total trade of Ethiopia increased by only seventy-two per cent in the twenty-five years prior to 1932, whereas that of the Sudan increased elevenfold and that of Kenya and Uganda fifteenfold.[2] Total trade in the thirties can be estimated—for the returns are neither quite complete nor wholly reliable—at rather more than £2,000,000 a year with imports and exports generally balanced.[3] This may be compared with totals for the Gold Coast, with one quarter the area, and about a third of the population, of some £15,000,000,000, and of Tanganyika, a little larger but physically poorer and with about half the population, of some £6,000,000. Ethiopia's large but relatively arid and scantily populated neighbour, the Sudan, shows a figure which varied between £11,000,000 and £15,000,000 in the thirties.

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[1] *Consular Report*, Cmd. 7620–32, *op. cit.*, pp. 7–9.

[2] Makereth, G., *Economic Conditions in Ethiopia*, Dept. of Overseas Trade, No. 507, 1932, p. 11.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 23. The figures given by the British Consul are as follows: 1912, £1,864,457; 1928–9, £2,822,852; 1929–30, £1,932,742.

There were three main Ethiopian exports. Between 10,000 and 20,000 tons of coffee were exported annually in the years just before 1936. About half of this was cultivated 'Harari', and about half the wild 'Abyssinian' coffee from Kaffa and elsewhere. In 1932, for instance, 20,000 tons were exported; in 1935 about 16,000 tons. Second in value came hides and skins, about 9,000 tons, which, badly cleaned and sun-dried, were a low-grade quality.[1] The third main export was beeswax, a by-product from the gathering of honey which was much in demand for the national drink *tej*. Much of it was collected from wild hives in the southern forested regions but the value of this export was negligible beside the other two. Imports were almost entirely composed of cotton goods, including cotton yarns for local manufacture. The records of merchant houses run by British subjects show that in 1930 ninety per cent of imports were in this category and also that nearly half of them came from Japan and a large proportion of the rest from India.[2]

Among the many conditions which hampered the development of trade was the all-important problem of Ethiopia's communications. Enough has been said above to show the exceptional barriers presented by nature. The conquest of the rich southern lands with their lower and gentler contours as compared with the north and the approach of these to the railway, did open up great possibilities. The Jibuti railway carried about seventy per cent of the external trade. About twenty per cent found its way into the Sudan by the river Baro and the Sudan trading post of Gambela, some ten per cent appears to have gone out through Eritrea and a negligible amount by Somaliland.[3] All these routes were difficult and expensive, and all meant long hauls through foreign territory to reach the sea. The shortest, by the railway, covered 480 miles of an exceptionally expensive haul; to this must be added the burden of interior transport on pack-animals over precipitous mountains, carried out by a people, who, for all their centuries of experience, never seemed to have become humane or skilful in this art.[4]

[1] Quaranta, *op. cit.*, pp. 23–7.

[2] Makereth, p. 26.

[3] These figures were very approximately the same for 1943, except that exports by British Somaliland had greatly risen at the expense of the Sudan and Eritrea proportions. This was presumably due to the new roads and the contacts opened up by the campaign of liberation, by the needs of British troops stationed in Somaliland, and the blockade of Jibuti.

[4] This is a very frequent comment by travellers. See especially Portal, G. H., *The English Mission of King Johannis of Abyssinia, 1887*, privately printed, p. 77.

In spite of their ancient culture and closer contacts with the world, the Ethiopians failed to develop their industries very much higher than the level of more primitive and pagan African countries. There was a higher standard of metal-work for religious and military purposes but the ordinary iron-workers, as in some neighbouring regions, remained a closed and despised caste. There was weaving, too, and cotton was planted in suitable conditions all over the country but the inadequacy of the local cotton strains led, in modern times, to a considerable importation of cotton yarns. In building, the Ethiopians with the startling exception of Lalibala and a certain number of other well-made churches which survive from the middle ages,[1] never rivalled or even approached their ancestors of the great days of Aksum. Since the sixteenth century all building of any importance and durability appears to have been carried out by foreigners or at least under their direction. The usual peasant arts of pottery, basket-making, etc., held their own against European imports. In the last years before the Italian occupation a few innovations had been made by foreigners who introduced a few saw-mills, oil-mills, and soap works. Apart from these beginnings, Ethiopia in 1935 was economically very little changed from what she had been when she was visited by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century.

THE ITALIAN OCCUPATION

The Italian invasion produced its most immediate and revolutionary effects in the economic sphere and especially in that of external trade. One of the main objects of the Italian aggression had been to add this rich tropical country to an autarchic empire which had hitherto collected colonies of the most unpromising kind, consisting largely of deserts. The whole mechanism of the corporative state was at once turned upon the new conquest and its trade was violently forced into the channels which ran into Italy's economic system. No less than a thousand state-controlled Italian companies were registered, including very large enterprises concerned with white colonization; with ranching or with planting cotton, vegetable fibres or oil-seeds; with new industries, or with transport agencies. The capital invested in this one region by Italy is, by the standards hitherto known in British colonial finance, amazing. For the first part of a scheme of development no less than £133,000,000 was set aside and an annual subvention of £10,000,000 was made to meet the costs of current administration. Commenting upon these figures in his foreword to Baron Quaranta's book, Lord Hailey stated: 'In her approach to the task of developing the resources of the country Italy has shown a comprehensive energy and a liberality in the provision of finance to which there is no parallel, nor indeed anything approaching a parallel, in the history of Colonial Africa.'[1]

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[1] See above, p. 34.

Under this policy imports naturally soared fantastically. Apart from imports required for development, there were now several hundred thousand Italians asking almost all the requirements of life from Italy. The rise in imports was nearly 3,000 per cent.[2] Exports, on the other hand, dropped beneath even the low level of the pre-Italian régime. There were several distracting factors to account for this: the disorders of a country still not wholly subjected; the dislocation of the population; the introduction of a new currency, and the attraction of large numbers of men to wage-labour upon public works. There was also, of course, a greatly increased internal market. Added to this was the harsh Italian eviction of the old-established merchants, especially those who were British subjects, and their replacement by Italians who were ignorant of the country's trade and were not even interested in the former staples. Thus the production of the main exports, including coffee and hides, actually showed a considerable diminution. It need hardly be said that such exports as there were had to go to Italy or to countries where Italy desired to get foreign exchange. Instead of being self-supporting in cereals, in 1936, 1937, and 1939 thousands of tons of millet, the main food of the population, had to be imported. It is, indeed, an interesting comment on Italy's immense effort to weld her new conquest into a self-sufficient imperial system that by 1939 the metropolitan country was importing only 1·86 of her raw materials from her East African territories, most of it being of the same kind that she had imported, or could have imported, before the conquest.

The brutality of Italy's aggression, her subsequent attack upon the Allies and consequent downfall added to the very understandable reluctance of the Ethiopians to admit that they owe anything to their conquerors also make an unfavourable mental climate to-day in which to assess the significance of Italian rule.[3] Its period was, moreover, too brief and unsettled to allow its character and purposes to attain any clear shape. On the economic side, however, even when it is granted that the whole policy was pursued with a single eye to Italian interests and that the affairs of the conquered people were forced, with a rapidity unique in colonial history, into a wholly artificial system, there yet remain some important assets for the liberated country.

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[1] Quaranta, *op. cit.*, p. vi.

[2] Bethell, A. D., 'Prospects of Ethiopian Trade and Industry', *East Africa and Rhodesia*, 2 November 1944, pp. 196–7. Mr. Bethell was at this date adviser to the Ministry of Commerce.

[3] Since this was written a report has come of a speech made by the Emperor on 23 July 1946 in which he said, referring to the Italian claims at the Peace Conference, 'If he speaks of material benefits, those who have been here before the invasion and who are in a position to establish a comparison, can place a proper evaluation upon that claim.' *New Times*, 24 August 1946. The evaluation might not be the one he seems to imply.

Chief among these is, of course, the astonishing system of roads. There is no need to emphasize afresh how much the political and economic development of Ethiopia has been held back by lack of communications in a terrain of almost unique difficulty. It is true that the present Emperor realized very early in his régime the fundamental relationship of roads to centralization but he was able to do little more than draw up plans and make a small beginning. By the time of his flight there were roads from Addis Ababa to Dessie and northwards to Lake Ashangi, constructed in the actual course of the Italian invasion, to Jimma and part of the way to Goré, and rough tracks led to the Kenya and Somaliland borders. But these were all dry-weather tracks, unsuitable for transport in the rainy seasons. The only all-weather road was that from Addis Ababa to Addis Alam, a distance of some thirty-five miles. The Emperor employed one or two foreign engineers, working with paid gangs for road work, but considerable use was made, as in colonial territories and according to African custom, of unpaid local labour.

The Italians made an effort which, alone in this matter of roads, recalled their ancient imperial greatness. They planned to build about 6,210 miles of roads and tracks and actually succeeded as to 4,347 miles, 2,145 of which were tarred or macadamized. The total cost was between £80,000,000 and £100,000,000. In their first twenty-four months they completed over 2,000 miles of metalled roads and many of these were built in some of the most formidable road-making country in the world. At one time no less than 60,000 Italian workmen were brought in for road construction and it is not perhaps surprising that in parts the roads cost £12,000 a mile.[1] The following main roads, the importance of which will be revealed by the map, radiated from Addis Ababa to the following places: Asmara, via Dessie; Burji and Debra Markos; Gambela via Jimma and Goré; Duante via Diredawa; Lekemti; Lake Zwai. There was also the important road from Dessie to the Red Sea port of Assab, from Diredawa via Harar to British Somaliland, from Wando to Negelli, and from Gondar to Asmara.[2]

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[1] Quaranta, *op. cit.*, Lord Hailey's foreword, pp. vi–vii.

[2] *Handbook of Ethiopia*, prepared by General Staff Intelligence, Khartoum, 1941, pp. 122–3.

These roads were mostly wide, modern motor-roads crossing many bridges and culverts and laid on a stone foundation. The list does not include roads that were not completed or dry-weather tracks.

The fighting of 1940–1 made havoc with this magnificent road system, both from deliberate destruction, above all through the blowing up of bridges, and also from hard usage, combined with the neglect of repairs. It was estimated in 1944 that it would require £1,000,000 to repair the roads, including the ninety-six broken bridges, and £250,000 a year to maintain the system.[1] According to an Ethiopian estimate the restored government was not able to spend more than £135,000 up to October 1944 upon roads and bridges, while it found that it cost £15,000 to asphalt one kilometre of main road and £1,500 to re-asphalt.[2] Later reports will certainly have been drawn up by the American experts who were called upon in 1945 to advise the Emperor upon this subject, but these are not available. To the credit side must be added £2,000,000 worth of road-making machinery which was left in the country. The Italians, moreover, imported a very large amount of motor transport, and in 1944 some 1,500 commercial vehicles, many of them large diesel lorries, were still on the roads, though they were naturally a declining asset. It is worth recording that, although the Italians did all they could to lessen their dependence upon the French railway by developing road transport, they were never able to bring the cost for road haulage below the freights on the railway, heavy though these were.

Whatever the future of the roads—and it will require a very flourishing trade to justify the upkeep of the whole system—it must be admitted that the Italians left behind them a large number of buildings; streets of shops and residential suburbs were built at the main provincial centres, where many public buildings, churches, mosques, cinemas, government, and Fascist party offices were also constructed. Some of these, especially the Italian residential houses, represent hasty and shoddy work and have proved to have inadequate foundations. Many of them were destroyed or damaged during the fighting or even after it. Ethiopians, from ignorance rather than from malice, made havoc of buildings, stabling cattle in them, lighting fires on the floors, and destroying the fittings. But in the capital about half of the ministries are now housed in Italian public buildings, and many Ethiopian officials are living in Italian villas. In their claim for reparations, however, the Ethiopians depreciated in the strongest terms the value of what the Italians had left to them and put in an immense counter-claim which included £12,500,000 for 2,000 churches and huts—the latter valued at £20 each—destroyed by the Italians.[1]

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[1] Bethell, p. 210. See also the *Review* October 1944, pp. 2–3, for an official account of the situation then. The writer argues that the Italian system is 'in reality a heavy load on the Imperial Government. It is not the "god-send" a superficial examination of the figures and the subtlety of Italian propaganda would have one to believe.'

[2] *Review*, October 1944.

Before leaving the subject of roads and buildings, it should be observed that it was into their construction that the main effort of Italy's hectic period of colonization was directed. Books written in Italy to glorify and justify their conquest concentrate very largely upon these public works.[2] They are filled with impressive photographs of roads, looking like tangled white ribbons, as they ascend the mountainous contortions of northern Ethiopia; of impressive bridges of all sizes and shapes; of wide boulevards leading into towns. There are similar pictures and plans of urban development, some of it very pleasing to the eye. All this material construction must interest and impress those British readers who know their own empire where there has been a striking lack of planning and even more of architectural beauty or seemliness.

A few modern industries had been begun before the invasion but the Italians introduced a number of new ones, mainly to meet the needs of Italian colonists. Factories for making soap, cement, textiles, matches, cigarettes, biscuits, macaroni, boots, bricks, tiles, and furniture have been established, and also distilleries, tanneries, and a brewery. Most of these factories have continued working, sometimes with the help of Italian mechanics and foremen. A factory of great interest to the Ethiopians was a cotton mill, now under English technicians, which has been able to work at a profit at a time when imports have been severely restricted. The Italians also introduced hydro-electric stations near the capital and Jimma, and greatly extended the telephone system.

It will thus be seen that against the destruction, misery, and disturbance inflicted upon Ethiopia by the Italians must be set the stimulating effects of the economic intrusion. This has not only given the country important, if rather expensive, economic assets but has opened the way to further industrial development, has introduced examples and conceptions of a higher standard of life and has allowed members of the official classes to enter into some of the amenities and conveniences which the Italians had prepared for themselves. Even the peasants have not been wholly unaffected. It was impossible to spend tens of millions of pounds in the country without a proportion of this reaching the native population. Large numbers were introduced, for the first time, to wage-labour at rates which appear, when the low cost of living is considered, to have been reasonably high, while there were plenty of new goods upon which to spend the wages. One piece of concrete evidence, even if it denotes no revolutionary change, is worth remarking. It has been said that the sudden Italian need for imports sent these up by 3,000 per cent: the benefit to the Ethiopians was relatively small but the figures do show that articles mainly for Ethiopian use did double the value they had under the former régime, while there was a noticeable shift over from the coarser cottons, the 'grey sheetings' of the trade, to the more expensive cotton goods.

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[1] See speech of Ethiopian delegate to Peace Conference, *New Times*, 28 September 1946.

[2] See, for example, *Opere per l'organizzazione civile in A.O.I.* produced by the Typographical Service of the Governor-General of Italian East Africa; *G.A.A.I.*, and *L'Edilizia nell'Africa Orientale Italiana*, Turin, 1939. This last book contains many interesting photographs and plans of native houses.

It should be unnecessary to say that this reference to some economic advantages that have come to Ethiopia as by-products of Italian aggression is a defence neither of that aggression nor of the subsequent economic policy of the conqueror. It is, indeed, difficult to believe that this extravagant economic erection, planned on a basis of false hopes, paralysed by control from Rome, riddled with corruption[1] and founded upon the neglect or exploitation of the great mass of the people, could have survived without drastic reform. If, after the destruction first of the medieval Ethiopian system and then of Italy's grandiose substitution for it, some assets have been gathered from the wreckage, this is cause for small thanks to the aggressors. Whether, if war had not at once revealed and destroyed the unsound core of Fascist dictatorship, Italian Government could have reformed itself and humanized and purified its colonial administration must remain one of those chapters which history, to which Mussolini so often appealed for justification, failed to write.

THE RESTORATION

Reconquest and the morrow of reconquest were not easy periods for Ethiopia economically. Liberation came earlier to Ethiopia than to other victims of Fascist conquest, but the world war was still at its height, its issue was still in doubt and it was difficult for the British Commonwealth, after liberating the country, to give her all the help and attention she needed. The country suffered from disorganization and lawlessness though this was far less than might have been expected. The Emperor, however, was in an extremely strong position and one supported by overwhelming military power, while the treaty with Britain in 1942, with its provision of advisers and subsidies, was a stabilizing influence. Currency, of which more will be said presently, proved a disturbing factor, but the isolation of the middle east and its economic organization under the Supply Centre in Cairo opened some immediate and, it may prove, temporary opportunities to Ethiopian trade.

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[1] Revelations appeared in the press some years ago from Italian sources about the gross corruption in Italian East Africa. It is worth remarking that Eritrea, admittedly a somewhat unpromising territory economically, always showed an adverse trade balance in the half-century of Italian rule. Longrigg, S. H., *A Short History of Eritrea*, 1945, p. 139.

The main export, coffee, recovered from its decline to 9,000 tons under the Italians and rose in 1943 to its old figure of 16,000 tons, while its price in sterling doubled. Whereas cereal exports had been small and fluctuating before 1936, Ethiopia met the desperate needs of the middle east in 1943 to the figure of 48,000 tons for which she received nearly £1,000,000. In 1944 this export rose to 60,000 tons and brought in £876,000. Total trade which, as we have seen, remained fairly static at something over £2,000,000 in the thirties rose in 1943 to £5,500,000 and in 1944 to £7,249,172.[1]

Mr. Bethell, the economic adviser from 1942 to 1944, did not regard these figures without some doubts as to the future. As normal trade conditions return Ethiopia, like other primary producers, will meet very severe competition, and her heavy transport costs, added to other difficulties of a somewhat backward country, may handicap her in the fierce struggle for markets. Her swollen cereal exports will certainly shrink in the face of competition in price or quality from the great wheat-producing areas and, especially in the middle east, from Australia: her coffee must fall at least in value, while in the matter of hides or skins much needs to be done—though here Ethiopia only shares the low standards of other African countries—to improve the processes of flaying and drying. Efforts to develop a trade in timber, in spite of the demand under war conditions, have not been very successful and, in normal conditions, this trade would fare badly in face of Canadian and other competition.

In quality much improvement of exports is needed. Officials of the Middle East Supply Centre were shocked at the low quality and dirty condition of the main Ethiopian products. Years of protest and warning from merchants handling Ethiopian trade had gone unheeded. In 1943 there were even accusations in Aden that cases of poisoning resulted from eating Ethiopian flour, with which the seeds of some poisonous weed left carelessly, perhaps, with the grain, had been ground.

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[1] For those and other figures see Bethell. For the 1944 figures in detail see the *Ethiopian Commercial, Industrial, and Agricultural Journal*, May 1945, pp. 19–20.

It is interesting to turn to the other side of the ledger and consider Ethiopian imports for 1944. They totalled £4,566,399 against the £2,682,773 for exports. £3,107,131 of this, or 67·1 per cent, was for textiles, over £2,500,000 being for cotton piece goods, with over £500,000 for cotton yarn for local weaving. No other import came anywhere near this figure, the only other items worth mentioning being salt and tobacco, the first a little over and the second a little under the £250,000 mark.

A return of exports to more modest levels would mean a severe curtailment of imports. Even under the favourable war-time conditions the adverse trade balance of the country was £1,160,000 for 1942, £440,000 for 1943, and £1,883,626 for 1944. The general situation would, it seems, have been even more unfavourable had it not been, on the one side, for the British subsidies and the heavy British military expenditure in the country, and, on the other, the difficulty of obtaining all the imports Ethiopia needed. Ethiopia's future will depend, like those of other countries, upon international agreements to foster world trade and especially to provide better and more steady prices for low-grade tropical primary produce. Her main economic life will probably remain bound up with agriculture and there is vast room here for improvements in quality and yield that should raise the local standard of life.

The Ethiopian Government drew the attention of the foreign ministers in Paris in 1945 to the difficulties facing the country with regard to commercial outlets. In making a political demand for the annexation of Eritrea, an interesting economic analysis was made of the proportion of trade passing through Massawa and Assab. The figures given for 1944 were as follows, in M.T. dollars—

Total trade	$61,000,000	(£6,100,000)
Total trade with Eritrea	$13,484,711	(£1,348,471)
Total Ethiopia trade through Assab	$ 5,356,208	(£535,620)

(85 per cent of the Assab customs are allocated to Ethiopia.)

Ethiopia claims that a great deal of the foreign trade of the four northern provinces passes through Massawa. But all her foreign trade passes through ports under foreign control. It is claimed that on the main outlet of the Jibuti railway Ethiopia suffers a double toll through the high freights (it is pointed out that in 1937, a good year, the railway profits were 138 per cent) and also through transit dues at the port of Jibuti, while, in addition, the Banque d'Indochine there levies a heavy commission on all the purchases of francs necessary for the payment of those dues.[1]

The political claims in support of which these economic grievances are put forward will be considered later.[2] The complaint with regard to freights and dues certainly demands expert investigation. But even if Ethiopia were allowed to annex all the surrounding coastlands in order to govern her own access to the seas and could also run the ports, roads, and railways with the same degree of efficiency as that with which they are at present conducted, as an inland mountain country with long and difficult hauls to the sea she would still be at a disadvantage compared with many of her competitors in the export of bulky crops.

It seems possible, however, that, like some other fortunate African countries, Ethiopia's development may be stimulated by the discovery of rich mineral deposits. The Italians, under the direction of the geological office set up after the conquest, began a systematic survey of the country. They claimed to have discovered copper, lead, platinum, magnesium, and iron. The area east of Harar was found to be rich in minerals. Much work was carried out in the western provinces where alluvial gold had been won from the earliest times. The Italian conclusion was that of all provinces Wallaga was the richest in minerals.[3] It is significant that already the mining revenue largely drawn from the new gold-field at Adola in Sidamo is estimated to have produced in 1944–5 £500,000 for the state, a figure which some believe to be an understatement. The future will also depend upon the development of local industries, and the most obvious possibility lies in the cultivation of more and better native cotton and the extension of textile factories. The Emperor and his councillors seem well aware of this possibility and great efforts are being made not only to retain existing factories in working order but, by means of technical schools and trade exhibitions, to stimulate new industries. At the second annual show of its kind in Addis Ababa, held on the 17th of November 1945, it was reported that the exhibits included not only the leather, metal-work, and ceramics that would be expected, but also cotton and woollen fabrics, carpets, some machine tools, perfumes, and European-style dress-making. Many of these were due to foreign skill and direction, but it is certainly the Emperor's intention to hasten the industrial education of his people. It is claimed in Ethiopia that the exhibition of 1946 showed a great advance in the amount and quality of manufactures produced by the native workers. 'The development of industry', the Emperor said to the artisans, 'will enrich Our country. Secondly, it will strengthen Our government and glorify its honourable name. . . . A permanent economy cannot be built only on imports.'[1]

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[1] *Ethiopian Memoranda, 1945*, pp. 8 ff.

[2] See below, pp. 434 ff.

[3] *G.A.A.I.*, 1940, vol. 1, pp. 947 ff.

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[1] *Herald*, 2 December 1946.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PUBLIC FINANCE

GENERAL

It follows from what has been said of the geography and the political and economic history of the country that the collection of revenue by the central government could never have been very easy. This is, indeed, one of the main clues to the limitations upon the Emperor's powers. It will be best to consider this question of public finance separately in the two periods of Haile Selassié's reign, with the briefest reference to the interval of abortive Italian rule which divides them.

Haile Selassié's government, for all the superstructure which had recently been added, remained, in 1935, closer to that of Europe of the fourteenth than of the twentieth century. It had still three characteristics of medieval finance. There was nothing resembling a budget or any centralized accounting. Secondly, no clear distinction had been developed between the sovereign's private finances and those of the state, especially in the sphere of expenditure, a statement which applies equally to the provincial governors in their spheres. Thirdly, a great deal of the revenue was still in kind and in labour and thus for the most part had to be levied and used locally by methods which gave every opportunity for abuse. Even when, in later days, salaries had been fixed in money, payment was, to say the least, irregular.

The constitution of 1931 promised in article 55 an annual budget framed by the Minister of Finance, deliberated upon by the two chambers and approved by the Emperor. All expenditure was to be in conformity with the budget. This was clearly an ideal which could not immediately be realized, and in fact, this budget was not produced before the invasion. This was probably because the figures for many of the items were inaccurate and those for others unobtainable, while some sources of revenue could not be reduced to figures at all. The financial adviser, an American who, as mentioned above, was much trusted by the Emperor, attempted the production of a budget, but it appears that he had failed to carry through this difficult task by the time of the Italian invasion. In discussing Ethiopian finance, therefore, before 1935, little more than guesswork can be offered.

A Ministry of Finance had existed in Menelik's day. It was housed in an old building in the palace precincts. Ministers were in close touch with the Emperor, but the office changed hands frequently. The ministry was mainly concerned with the State Bank, currency questions, the sale of monopolies and the government workshop. In this workshop were made the ceremonial clothes, the embroidered shawls, head-dresses of lion's mane, and swords, which were presented with the titles which required their use. But a great deal of the revenue, above all those parts which meant most to the people, lay outside the ministry's jurisdiction, while the financial adviser seems to have been consulted mainly upon questions of banking, currency, monopolies, concessions, and foreign companies.

THE REVENUE BEFORE 1935

The following represents a list of the main items of revenue. Some comments upon their character have been added.

(1) *Provincial Taxation.* For most of Ethiopia's history tribute would have been a better word than taxation for this item. We have seen Aksum exacting tribute from conquered enemies in the first records of Ethiopia's history and there must have been a long period during which it would have been difficult to know whether to define many parts of the growing Empire as tributary states or component provinces.

From the later middle ages, however, we hear much of provincial tribute in the accounts of travellers; this consisted of horses and fine clothes with cattle and grain from the north, gold from the west, and slaves from the west and south-west.

Alvarez, our authority for the end of the middle ages and the eve of the Galla invasions, gives us a picture of the tribute from Gojjam alone as it arrived at the royal tents. He lists 3,000 mules, 3,000 horses, and 3,000 of the large, fleecy cloths used as bed-covers, besides 30,000 cotton cloths and 'they also said that they brought thirty thousand ouquias of gold'.[1] He admits that the gold came in trays covered with cloths and also that most of the equine tribute was unfit to ride, while the reiterated numbers of three, or thirty thousand rouse a further suspicion.[2]

[1] It has not been possible to find the exact equivalent of an ouquia.

[2] Alvarez, pp. 321–2.

D'Almeyda, the Jesuit who went to Ethiopia in 1625, gives a more convincing account of the provincial tribute. He declares that the tribute that Alvarez observed was put on as a show to impress him but, in spite of this, all his evidence went to prove that the revenues were far larger before the Galla inroads impoverished the country and even cut across the communications of some parts with the royal headquarters. He speaks of considerable sums in gold coming in from Gojjam, Amhara, Tigré, Bagemdir, and Shoa, but the richest tribute, though paid irregularly, had at one time come from the then border kingdom of Enarea. Altogether he lists 4,600 ouquias of gold, which he considers the equal of 46,000 pieces of eight of his day, and he states that there was in fact something more than this received in gold. He adds a tribute of 3,000 lengths of cloth, worth 3,000 pieces of eight, from Gojjam with 200 very large lengths worth 2,000. The same kingdom sent in 3,000 horses, 'very ordinary nags', but all this tribute had ceased since the Gallas invaded the region.

In addition to these provincial tributes the Emperor claimed loads of provisions from his own lands and from all husbandmen in some provinces, but most of this he gave to his local commanders. Eighty years before, a law exacting a tithe of one beast out of every ten cattle once in three years had been issued but 'the officers who are to gather this cattle, commit so many insolencies on the poor country people that they ruin and consume them'. There was also a levy of cloths per loom in what may be called the 'home provinces' which elsewhere was 'bestowed on those lords to whom he has given the lands of those countries'. D'Almeyda concludes—and his opinion is welcome, since neither his nor Alvarez's accounts would satisfy a modern economist—'These are the revenues of the Abyssinian Empire which being summed up, it plainly appears are inconsiderable enough; not only in regard of what fame has spread abroad, but of what might be expected from so many kingdoms and provinces.'[1]

Ludolphus describes the revenue as being all in kind, including gold, horses, cattle, corn, hides, and garments and gives the following tributes of gold from the provinces: Enarea, 1,500 oz. (representing a decline on the previous amount); Gojjam, 1,100 oz.; Tigré, 2,500 oz.; Dembea, 500 oz. He concludes by remarking that 'as much or less' comes from 'other kingdoms'. Here, too, no clear picture can be gained.[2] Most early writers emphasize the great importance of the dues from the extensive royal domains as sources of revenue or of largesse to the church and to the Emperor's supporters.

When we come to modern times we may assume that, howeve broken the continuity of this taxation had been in the past, in theory every provincial governor should have dispatched to the Emperor in cash or in kind a proportion of the revenues of his province. These were raised from the various forms of taxation which will be described in the chapter upon provincial government, and which included court fees, the produce of the tolls which were levied by local potentates at provincial borders and at least the surplus of the tithe after the upkeep of the provincial army had been met. It is impossible to learn how many governors fulfilled this obligation at the date we are considering and what was the extent of their contributions, especially as the Emperor appears to have had different arrangements with different provinces. It was reported in 1906 that Menelik fixed the tribute for each province and the governors divided the obligations amongst their subordinates. During his decline and in the reign of Lij Yasu the governors became increasingly independent. Their tribute is said to have declined sharply, and it is not known how far the present Emperor was able to restore the position. It is estimated that before the semi-independence of the rich Jimma province was suppressed in 1933, the Sultan, according to a treaty made with Menelik, sent in a tribute worth about 200,000 Maria Theresa dollars. The arrival of the train of mules and slaves carrying this tribute, before it was converted into cash, had once been one of the annual events in Addis Ababa. The chief of the Wallaga-Leka, who also had something approaching a 'treaty status', was reported to have sent in a similar sum. The chief of Beni-Shangul paid his tribute partly in alluvial gold which was found in his rivers. It is not possible to state what revenue came in from Gojjam and Tigré or whether the Emperor took tribute from his chief supporters and those members of his family who held governorships or large estates. It is believed that some provinces were farmed out and that the continued tenure of the governor depended upon the regularity and amount of his payments. Towards 1933 the Emperor arranged that certain selected provinces should raise taxes in cash, pay salaries, and hand their surplus revenue to the treasury.

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[1] Tellez, pp. 61–3.

[2] Ludolphus, pp. 205 ff.

It must be remembered that, through their upkeep of the provincial governors and all other provincial officials and of the greater part of the armed forces, and through the heavy obligation of 'purveyance' to officials, soldiers, and authorized travellers, the provinces, even apart from any tribute dispatched to the centre, were contributing heavily, if wastefully, to the cost of the government, and that the cash value of the revenue reaching the Emperor cannot be taken, as with a centralized state, to represent the true total.

(2) *Customs.* Ethiopia was largely self-supporting, and as we

have seen, her foreign trade was small.[1] The figures for the rates and the approximate total trade are known, and if all the dues upon this were actually collected and reached the Emperor this would represent in the early thirties a revenue of rather less than £200,000. Allowances must, however, be made for duty-free government imports and for defalcations, for which there were many prosecutions. In 1931 a very unpopular consumption tax was added on a number of imported articles which was estimated to bring in £25,000 a year.[2]

(3) *The Railway.* By an agreement of January 1908, the Compagnie Impériale des Chemins de Fer Ethiopiens provided for the payment to the Ethiopian Government of fifteen per cent of the net profits for the Ethiopian part of the line. In addition to this the Emperor held 8,650 shares according to figures published by the company. The total revenue from these two sources amounted to approximately £25,000 in 1935 and 1934. In 1934 as a result of a dispute the railway company paid to the government 6,000,000 francs and increased the government's share of profits from fifteen to twenty-eight per cent.

(4) *Concessions and Monopolies.* Concessions to foreign interests were not as numerous as is sometimes thought. The Ethiopians, whether or not they knew anything of the modern history of Egypt or Morocco, showed, except at moments of great need, a reluctance to grant concessions or accept loans from Europeans. An English economic report of 1906 stated that the impossible terms asked for concessions prevented any of these being seriously considered in Europe, and the British Consul writing in 1931 said the statement had remained true for the succeeding twenty-five years. A French company held a salt monopoly granted for a large sum in the difficult days of 1931, but its results were to raise the price of salt, to drive the people as far as possible back upon the local product and to encourage contraband trading. There were some road and mining concessions, including one for alluvial gold and platinum in western Ethiopia, which paid modest royalties, and one for timber near the capital. A Belgian company obtained a concession to run some plantations in the southern Galla country. The only really important economic activity conducted by foreigners was the French railway.

The government held a monopoly for tobacco and matches, and the manufacture of alcohol. The annual return from these sources must have been very small.

(5) *Revenue from the Emperor's Estates.* These estates were widely distributed in various parts of the country, the largest being his own principality of Harar. They were called *mad bet*, 'lands for the

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[1] See above, pp. 178 ff.

[2] Makereth, pp. 8–9.

support of the table', or royal household. These State Domains had always been a very important source of royal revenue, though mainly in kind. The present Emperor had some well-managed coffee plantations upon his land and the Empress and other members of the royal family also held large areas. The return from them must have been a large item, but, as much of it was consumed locally by those appointed to manage or to live upon the estates, and as a great deal sent up to Addis Ababa was in kind, it is impossible even to guess its total. The upkeep of the crowds of palace officials and servants and the Emperor's lavish hospitality must have used up the tributes of honey, grain, and meat which poured into the capital from the Emperor's neighbouring lands. It was part of the peasants' obligation, and one which caused them considerable hardship, to transport this produce to the capital. The reception and distribution of edible wealth have generally been regarded as the privilege and duty of rulers in the stage of political and economic development reached by Ethiopia.

It must be repeated, however, that even this very rough estimate does not carry us very far, as so much of what was in fact revenue was given in service or in kind and most of this went to support provincial government and the army. We may note that the Ethiopian Government in 1945 claimed that the revenues before the Italian war were worth £5,000,000,[1] but unless a very inflated cash valuation of all provincial services in kind and labour has gone into this figure it is difficult to understand it. Upon a rough calculation of all these items it seems probable that the Emperor received in cash something between £300,000 and £500,000 a year. To this must be added, however, the special levies which were imposed for purposes such as his visit to Europe.

THE EXPENDITURE BEFORE 1935

Turning to the other side of the ledger, the same obscurity surrounds the question of expenditure. The Emperor had to bear the following list of main charges. This list, incidentally, will give some picture of the reforms he began to carry out before 1935.

(1) *Upkeep of the Palace and Public Works, etc.* It has been said that a great deal of this revenue came from dues in kind. But the food and drink for the entertainment of Europeans had to be purchased, and considerable sums must have been spent upon the European furnishings.

(2) *Public Works.* The Emperor was very much interested in building and there were a number of additions and improvements to

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[1] *Ethiopian Memoranda*, 1945, p. 27.

the royal palace. He also built a small modern palace of his own. Among many buildings put up by the Ministry of Public Works in Addis Ababa were the Parliament House, a modern prison, two churches, a hospital, and several schools. Aerodromes and a costly wireless station must be added to this list.

The Emperor was very naturally interested in roads, which were vital to his centralizing policy, but, as we have seen, he was able to do little more than make a beginning.

(3) *Official Salaries.* The majority of these, even for men who worked mostly at headquarters, was paid by grants of lands with the dues in kind and in labour owed by the *gabars* (tenants) living upon them. Such salaries as were paid in cash were very low, a fact which may partly account for the frequent cases of peculation. The annual bill for the salaries of the European advisers, technical missions and other European employees had to be paid entirely in cash at rates, fantastic by Ethiopian standards of that period, which must have totalled about £25,000–£30,000 a year.

(4) *Social Services.* The government maintained several schools and hospitals, mainly in the capital, and paid the salaries of their native and non-native staffs.

(5) *The Army.* The national levy was raised by the governors and their subordinates in the provinces: these soldiers were not paid, except in some parts by food from the tithe-barns or the grant of land and *gabar* labour. The Emperor, however, had to pay for the Belgian mission which trained the Imperial Guard, and the Swedish mission which trained officer-cadets. He also had to pay (and, in view of the difficulties put in his way by some European nations, probably at a high price) for the aeroplanes, artillery, rifles, machine-guns, and ammunition he bought from Europe for that part of his forces which he tried to modernize. In a claim presented by the Emperor in 1945 for compensation by the Italian Government it is stated that the cost of the arms, equipment, and other supplies for the army, including fifteen aeroplanes, was over £16,000,000, and the cost of army pay for ten months was £10,450,000. No-one, even in Ethiopia, is in a position to check these figures and all that need be said is that they represent a claim against an ex-enemy and that neither this sum, nor anything approaching it, came out of the central Ethiopian exchequer.[1]

(6) *The Police.* There was a police force of about 3,000 men which operated in and around Addis Ababa, Diredawa, and along the railway. It was stiffened by men who had seen service in the King's African Rifles

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[1] *Ethiopian Memoranda*, 1945, p. 26. See above, pp. 161 ff., for a description of the method of maintaining armies.

and the Italian army. This force was reorganized by a Belgian mission in 1933.

THE FINANCIAL POLICY OF THE EMPEROR

In view of the scanty information available about the Emperor's revenues at this period, it is not easy to comment upon his financial policy. Indeed, he was hardly in a position to develop one. The world slump which occurred at the beginning of the Emperor's reign hit tropical produce very hard, as the British colonies had good reason to know. Although, owing to her currency, the falling silver exchange helped Ethiopia's trade exports at this difficult period, yet the yields from the customs fell by thirty-five per cent, and the government did not take those measures of economy with which the slump was met in other African territories. The year 1931 was, indeed, one of lavish expenditure. The Emperor is thought to have spent several million dollars upon the coronation, which was carried out on the most costly scale. At the same time, he bought out the existing Bank of Abyssinia for £235,000, in order to set up a national bank.[1] He paid £50,000 for the introduction of a nickel coinage (receiving some credit for the silver coins called in) and set up, through an Italian firm, a very powerful and costly wireless station. His new financial adviser tried in vain to raise loans in New York, London, and Paris. Advice from Britain to apply to the League of Nations for a loan was not taken, as the Emperor, unlike the Austrian Government, was not prepared to allow the degree of supervision this would entail. This, at least, had the result that Ethiopia remained one of the few countries in the world free from any public debt. To meet his needs, the Emperor, among other expedients, imposed the consumption tax and sold the monopoly of salt.

The Emperor must have had another difficult time as he prepared to meet the Italian invasion even if the expenditure figures given above are inflated. With great restraint he refrained to the end from raiding the resources of the national bank, and it was believed by many that he drew upon a reserve of bullion stored by Menelik against a time of crisis. It was in this emergency that he resorted for the first time to a direct tax upon his people for the central revenue. He issued a decree in 1934 imposing a tax of $1 upon all adults and of twenty per cent upon all salaries and feudal dues. It is difficult to learn how much of this was collected, and it is said that the innovation was highly unpopular and that collection was resisted in some parts of the northern provinces.

It does not seem that his private fortune was very large or that he had placed much of it abroad, and his financial situation appears to have been by no means easy during his exile. He has sometimes been accused of avarice but, in so far as the accusation has any basis, it must have been mainly the kind of avarice practised by Queen Elizabeth in the interests of the state. Certainly the bulk of what may be regarded as his private resources must have been spent upon the costly policies of reform and modernization which were so near his heart until the moment came when he had to devote everything to the vain attempt to save his country from foreign conquest.

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[1] Makereth, p. 9.

THE ITALIAN OCCUPATION

The Italian financial system hardly needs to be studied in this book for its own sake, and, for all the permanent effect it may have had upon Ethiopia, it can be dismissed in a very few words.

Enough has been said of the vast sums spent upon Ethiopia to show that no taxation could produce a return that would have any significance beside them. The administration was financed by credits voted by the Italian chamber as part of the national budget with the corollary of strict control from Rome. It is difficult to assess whether taxation was unduly heavy: it was certainly highly complex. By 1938 there were large numbers of separate taxes, both central and local. They included a tithe, carrying on the Ethiopian principle, on all products of the soil; a tax of one thirtieth on the value of each head of livestock; a house-tax and income tax; with further taxes on servants, improvements, on the consumption of electricity and even, it was said, taxes on taxes in order to defray the cost of collection. It does not seem, however, that Italy ever worked out any scientific system of taxation and it is to be noticed that Baron Quaranta, writing in August 1939, gives no information about it, remarking 'The details of the fiscal system to be introduced in the new dependency are still under consideration.'[1] Official Ethiopian opinion goes so far as to deny that the Italian Government succeeded in imposing any kind of taxation upon the country.[2] This is manifestly an overstatement since the restored government actually found it convenient to retain for two or three years the Italian law of taxation upon business firms.

THE RESTORATION

Enough has been said of the economic position immediately after the liberation of the country to show that the Emperor and his advisers were faced with a very difficult problem of public finance. They had to decide how far they could attempt to keep up the innovations and installations of the government which had been imposed by their enemies. The old, simple system of balanced trade at a low level of government based largely upon revenues in kind and labour, with the large provincial autonomy that this entailed, was a workable system of its own kind. The expensive, modern structure of the Italians was another kind of system. Ethiopia could not return wholly to the old system. It would be bad for the régime if all the amenities the Italians had introduced in the towns and in communities were at once abandoned. Yet she could not, for more than one reason, continue to administer at the extravagant Italian level, and the question was whether it was possible to find some stage between the two systems at which it was possible to halt. The question, a political as well as a financial one, was mixed up with another that was almost wholly political. How much financial and other help could the Emperor accept from the liberating British, in order to tide him over the first years, without impairing the sovereignty of which he and his people were so jealous?

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[1] Quaranta, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

[2] Talbot, D., 'The Finance Ministry Interviewed', *Review*, August 1944, p. 9.

Long and difficult negotiations were needed before the treaty of the 31st of January 1942 came to be signed.[1] Upon the financial side it gave Ethiopia as a free grant from the British exchequer a subsidy which tapered rapidly over three years. Article IV, covering the financial side, runs as follows: 'His Majesty the Emperor, having intimated to the Government of the United Kingdom that he will require financial aid in order to re-establish his administration, the Government of the United Kingdom will grant to His Majesty the sum of Pounds Sterling one million five hundred thousand during the first year and Pounds Sterling one million during the second year of the currency of this Agreement.' £500,000 would be paid for a third year and £25,000 for a fourth year, if the agreement should remain in force. The payments were to be made quarterly and in advance. On his side the Emperor absolved the British Government from payments for the use of immovable property used by their forces during the war. In a further clause of article IV the Emperor agreed 'that there should be the closest co-operation between the Ethiopian authorities and his British Advisers to be appointed in accordance with Article II (*a*), regarding public expenditure'.

A British financial adviser, Mr. F. Stafford, was appointed by the Emperor under the terms of the treaty with another for the customs department. It may well be imagined that it was hard work to build a new system of public finance upon the old medieval foundations, which were still cluttered up with the wreckage of the Italian structure. Fortunately one of the few Ethiopians who had been trained in economics had escaped the Graziani massacre. This was Ato Yilma Diressa, born in 1907, who had studied in Egypt and at the London School of Economics. He was made Vice-Minister of Finance, no minister being appointed over him. A staff was collected; something like a school of accountancy was set up and the British advisers compiled and expounded a set of financial regulations. Moreover, as the British advisers could not speak Amharic and most of the Ethiopians could not talk English, the proceedings were made more difficult by the need of interpreters, especially as few of the required standard were available.

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[1] See Appendix D.

THE BUDGET

During the first two years (1941–3), it is not surprising, therefore, that it proved impossible to draw up a proper budget.[1] The task has proved difficult even for some modern states emancipated from enemy occupation. The newly appointed ministers were quite unaccustomed to the process of drawing up estimates, of budgeting forward, of submitting all their plans and payments to public scrutiny and acting under the rigid discipline of modern centralized finance. In addition, they were plagued by very serious currency difficulties which will be discussed later. However, a rough-and-ready rationing of the expected revenues was made between the departments, and the Ethiopian Government afterwards reduced the results, doubtless in very approximate terms, to figures. It claims, however, that those for the year September 1943 to September 1944 can be regarded as a budget.[2] Fortunately, perhaps, the difficulties of arranging for expenditure from central funds at this early stage of the restoration resulted, in a country in which the provinces were accustomed to running themselves, in the Emperor at the end of this year finding a surplus on his hands.

It is important to note that the figures which follow are in Maria Theresa dollars. Fortunately, however, for most of the period in question a division of the Ethiopian figures by ten will give a convenient and roughly approximate conversion of dollars into pounds, though the rates have varied a little.

1941–2

Allocations were made upon a monthly basis to the departments which resulted in :

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[1] *New Times*, 15 December 1945.

[2] The Ethiopian year begins in September.

	$
Expenditure	11,940,268
Surplus	6,693,250

1942–3

	$
Revenue—estimated	23,291,690
actual	27,154,413 (A)
Expenditure—estimated	24,642,822
actual	25,223,588
Surplus	1,930,824
Total Treasury Assets at end of year	9,156,568 (B)

(A) Of this forty-eight per cent was provided by the British subvention.

(B) These included, in addition to nearly $7,000,000 in hand, the capital of the State Bank and of the official Sabaean Utility Corporation.[1]

1943–4

Revenue—estimated	22,310,000
actual (including British subvention)	28,944,846
Expenditure	30,546,432
Deficit	1,601,586

In commenting upon these figures the Ethiopian Government points out that British payments amounting to $5,000,000 were received. Therefore the revenue, without the subvention, rose by more than fifty per cent above that of 1942–3. They also point out that the year's expenditure was very heavy because of the great increase in government organization, the improvements to security and the establishment of new legations. Presumably all these items will be recurrent. The accounts contain figures to show that in spite of the small deficit in current revenue the assets of the government, as represented by cash reserves and investments, increased to $11,896,706.

1944–5

These figures are given in the accompanying table in full in order to show for one year the exact sources of revenue and the detailed allocation of expenditure. The comparable figures for 1943–4 are set beside them. A few very slight adjustments in the wording of items have been

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[1] *Ethiopian Memoranda*, 1945, p. 22.

THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

Table showing Revenue and Expenditure for 1943–4 and 1944–5.

REVENUE.	September, 1943–4.	September, 1944–5.
Land Revenue	$	$
Land Tax	2,886,641·08	3,960,502·64
Tithe	3,230,046·70	5,768,481·13
Market Dues	2,322,746·39	2,594,049·43
Wood Tax	113,644·04	142,282·23
	8,553,078·21	12,465,315·43
Court Fees and Fines	1,037,101·83	1,373,121·52
Customs	7,779,536·12	7,807,641·90
Inland Revenue		
Property Tax	47,880·07	59,084·17
Profit Tax	823,284·68	1,027,045·97
Alcohol Tax	398,226·73	301,436·78
Petrol Tax	388,058·57	449,649·20
Salt Tax	1,030,559·65	1,141,713·00
Entertainment Tax	14,717·50	20,511·00
Stamp Duty	24,481·66	123,582·27
Income Tax		244,184·40
Income Tax on Salary	35,789·99	
	11,579,636·80	3,367,206·79
Tobacco Monopoly	726,450·51	955,871·30
Licences and Fees	429,625·70	38,058·28
Mining Revenue		
Sale of Gold	1,364,261·66	10,638,987·05
Salt Mines		126,699·75
	2,520,337·87	10,765,686·80
Receipts from Government Departments		
Ministry of Agriculture		186,526·36
Ministry of Public Works		43,626·93
Ministry of the Pen. B.S. Printing Press		253,875·75
Ministry of Finance M.T. Printing Press		41,577·40

REVENUE (Contd.).	September, 1943–4.	September, 1944–5.
	$	$
Ministry of State Domains		750,791·16
Ministry of Education		33,612·91
Ministry of Interior Public Health		140,092·68
Ministry of Commerce and Industry		223·30
Ministry of Foreign Affairs		2,327·77
Ministry of the Pen		57,178·34
Ministry of Justice		22,140·00
Ministry of War		5,971·58
Ministry of Communications		178,027·42
Aviation		20·00
Addis Ababa Municipality		4,535·77
Ministry of P.T.T.	358,814·88	337,564·42
State Domains	261,717·46	
Various Govt. Depts.	635,337·05	
	1,255,869·39	2,058,091·79
Miscellaneous	363,737·85	228,136·96
Custodian of Enemy Property	26,134·02	
Income from Government Investments		175,000·00
Issa and Danakil Administration		103,896·04
Workshop	77,753·73	
British Government Subsidy	5,000,000·00	1,915,760·00
Deposits	2,881·25	288,483·42
Total Revenue	29,379,429·12[1]	41,542,270·23
Cash Balance from 1935	8,989,276·48	
Cash Balance from 1936		7,380,412·65
Grand Total	38,368,705·60	48,922,682·88

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[1] The latest figure, issued in the *Ethiopian Memoranda*, 1945, is $28,944,846·85, but as the earlier figure differs so slightly and gives the detailed items, it has been retained.

EXPENDITURE.	September, 1943–4.	September, 1944–5.
	$	$
H.I.M. Civil List	2,408,060·31	1,927,511·00
Prime Ministry	130,034·79	217,877·61
Ministry of the Pen	745,965·53	789,196·52
Ministry of Public Works and Communications	1,608,504·48	3,661,442·17
Ministry of Education	952,388·93	1,697,240·35
Ministry of Commerce and Industry	146,099·71	205,201·67
Ministry of Interior	6,713,990·44	8,660,897·47
Ministry of Agriculture	442,171·41	583,458·83
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	655,063·04	705,941·98
Ministry of Finance	759,736·17	2,538,585·93
Ministry of War	10,533,941·93	9,831,578·38
Ministry of Justice	963,039·29	1,245,427·21
Ministry of P.T.T.	644,104·81	543,375·24
Aviation		256,367·14
Parliament	163,994·91	220,465·85
Imperial Guard	1,261,273·72	1,667,146·85
Bank Charges		62,191·93
Ecclesiastical Service		59,589·24
Guesthouse Department		8,788·50
Incidental Expenses		1,691,646·86
Lease-Lend		11,912·16
Maintenance, Imperial Palace		575,500·00
Finanace Guards Armoury		5,030·00
Tobacco Monopoly Reserve		115,929·71
State Domains		904,000·62
Mining Department		1,278,512·74
Finance Garage		1,617,918·74
Transport Charges, New Currency		16,500·00
Miscellaneous and Unforeseen[1]	838,554·06	
Purchase of Machinery	458,025·05	

[1] It may be assumed this item includes some of the items immediately above, for which no figures are given for 1943–4.

EXPENDITURE (Contd.).	September, 1943–4.	September, 1944–5.
	$	$
Municipality	6,766·11	
Provincial Expenditures[1]	1,113,717·57	
	30,545,432·26	41,099,234·70
Investments	3,701,661·23	1,771,711·01
Advances		1,967,007·20
Cash in Hand		
Central Treasury	1,706,662·86	1,405,965·58
Cash at Bank	726,044·33	2,023,724·31
Cash at Provincial Treasuries	1,282,327·92	655,040·08
Grand Total	37,962,128·60	48,922,682·88

made in order wherever possible to bring the figures for the two years on to the same line.[2]

These figures invite a few comments. On the revenue side the outstanding and, in the circumstances, astonishing feature is the rise of the revenue from just under $30,000,000 to just over $40,000,000, and this despite the dropping, through the expiry of the first agreement, of the British subsidy, which in the previous year had represented £500,000. It is interesting to note that in the estimates for 1944–5 the figure for the land-tax was $2,500,000 with $9,000,000 for what was called the

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[1] Presumably the whole of this expenditure for 1944–5 is included under the heading, 'Ministry of the Interior'.

[2] The figures for 1944–5 have been taken from the *Ethiopian Memoranda*, 1945, pp. 24–5; the figures for 1943–4 have been taken from the *New Times* for 29 December 1945, one or two small errors having been corrected. A substantially different version of the 1943–4 budget appeared in the *New Times* of 14 April 1945. It is certainly surprising that the figures should have been changed at a date so long after the closing of the budget.

'new land tax', a total of $11,500,000. As the land-tax for 1943–4 produced just under $3,000,000 this was budgeting for a most astonishing increase from this tax. Indeed, in the first draft of this chapter, before it had been possible to see the final figures, the following remark occurred: 'It is very difficult to believe that this huge increase in the land-tax could be obtained so suddenly without hardship to the people, unless they have been very much under-taxed hitherto.' It had been hoped, by this tax, to extract a large amount of dollars that had remained buried during two wars and a foreign occupation. The large deficit of revenue on the item was, however, largely met by the almost equally striking excess over the estimate in the mining revenue of $5,500,000. This was an increase of $9,500,000 over the mining revenue of the previous year.

Turning to the expenditure side we note an increase of about $11,000,000. We may notice that the very high proportion of revenue spent under military and security items appears to have come down to about one quarter of the total revenue, though it is difficult to be quite sure that this is so, owing to the elimination in the final figures of the detailed headings, including police.

Promising advances in expenditure are those on the public works and education departments, the latter being attained in spite of the difficulties with regard to staff and buildings.

When we look at the budget for 1944–5 as a whole, however, and remember how revolutionary a change its introduction means in Ethiopia and how many of the few educated men were murdered by the Italians, its production and character—if we assume its substantial accuracy—are a remarkable achievement. It seems that the Minister of Finance and his advisers are to be congratulated upon a budgetary situation which is certainly far more favourable than most people, both inside and outside Ethiopia, anticipated. Certainly the Ethiopian Government shows neither pessimism nor false modesty. 'Officials of the Ministry of Finance expect revenue to increase by substantial amounts for the next three years" runs an official statement of 1945.[1] 'In this they are undoubtedly correct as they have been in their estimates for the past three years. It is difficult to conceive how the finances of the country could have been better managed than is the case'. It is to be hoped that this statement may not prove to have been over-confident.

In the estimates details of expenditure were given; one of the most interesting sections was that of the Civil List which was as follows:

[1] *Ethiopian Memoranda*, 1945, p. 23.

	$
Maintenance of Imperial Palace	600,000
Civil List Pensions	180,000
Royal Benefactions	500,000
Public Banquets	25,000
H.I.M. Aide-de-Camp's Office	15,000
Mechanical Transport	175,900
H.I.M. Private Secretariat	70,410
Chambers of Deputies and of Senate	374,080
H.I.M. Chamberlain's Office	29,056
Museum and National Library	58,856
Distinguished Guests Reception Office	8,846
Ichegé's Office	16,026
	2,053,174

The American governor of the bank, who was appointed in 1943, was able to arrange for the year 1945–6 an American loan of $3,000,000 (American). It is planned to spend this on mechanical transport and machinery and to raise the volume of trade between America and Ethiopia.[1]

In a memorandum issued just as this chapter was going to press the Ethiopian Government have given some general comments upon the revenues for 1945–6. It is stated that customs duties will provide twenty per cent, and income and profit taxes five-and-a-half per cent of the revenue. The largest single source will be the land-tax. Fifty-one per cent of all the revenue will be derived from the agricultural and extractive industries.

TAXATION POLICY SINCE 1941

The first legislative act in this sphere was the customs law.[2] This laid down duties mostly ranging between ten and thirty per cent. This followed mainly orthodox lines for customs policy, levying low duties of from ten to fifteen per cent on the bulk of cotton goods, which, as we have seen, represent sixty-eight per cent of the imports, and keeping the rate at ten per cent upon yarn for manufacture and other raw materials.

During the early period of the restoration the Italian profits tax remained in force, but this was for many reasons a very unsuitable arrangement, and in May 1944 a new personal and business tax law was proclaimed.[1] It was not to apply to any incomes earned from agriculture or soldiering, but all traders and craftsmen were to come under these schedules. Schedule A represented an income tax upon all with incomes of over £30 a year, rising with increasing incidence from 10s. a year upon incomes of between £30 and £50, reaching £2 on those between £100 and £150 and £900 on those between £9,000 and £10,000. Schedule B covered traders and craftsmen, presumably of a type for which it would be difficult to assess income tax: these are classified according to a large number of activities, and graded by the Minister of Finance. The upward limit of taxation was fifteen per cent of profits except for those liable to surtax, and the fixed taxes ranged from £1 a year upon the lowest category containing salt dealers, skilled workers, butchers, and greengrocers, up to £500 upon certain classes of importers, haulage contractors, etc. The third schedule, C, was for payment of super-tax at a rate increasing from twenty-five per cent on incomes between £10,000 and £25,000 to fifty per cent upon incomes of over £100,000.

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[1] *New Times*, 24 August 1946.

[2] The Customs and Export Duties Proclamation, No. 39 of 1943.

The Ethiopian Government has been up against a difficulty that has often faced colonial governments, that of assessing income tax in a community where book-keeping is in its infancy. Presumably the income tax will fall mainly upon earners of regular wages and salaries, and the law provides for deduction at source for those in government employ and from the few firms, mainly foreign, which keep proper books. The rough and ready classification into types will affect the traders and artisans who lie outside these groups. The rate of 10s. a year upon incomes between £30 and £50 seems very lenient, especially as these must represent an important and growing source of revenue. It is difficult to relate it to the rate of £1 upon the petty salt dealer and skilled worker.

Appeals from assessment lay to a committee of sixteen, nominated by the Emperor. This committee, appointed in November 1944, consisted of twelve senior officials and judges, including the British adviser on customs, and four merchants, three of them being foreigners.[2]

This tax would, of course, fall only upon the trading community and skilled wage earners. The taxes which affect the great bulk of the population are the tithe and land-taxes. These are such an integral part of the whole position with regard to land-tenure and provincial government that they must be considered more fully in this context in the chapters on the provinces.[1] But the latest legislation may be briefly considered here.

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[1] A Proclamation to Provide for Payment of a Tax by all Individuals and Businesses, No. 60 of 1944.

[2] General Notice, No. 28 of 1944.

The Emperor claims to be the ultimate owner of all land and of all taxes from it. In practice land-tenure and land-dues in Ethiopia are highly complex and vary from province to province. The taxes from land in kind, labour, and cash have in the past been allotted by the Emperor into many other hands than his own, or have been lost to him by encroachments more or less hallowed by time and custom. The Emperor has, however, generally asserted his rights to the tithe, or tax of ten per cent, on the produce of the land which in most parts of the country was concentrated mainly upon the cereal crop. The great object of the central government since the restoration has been to consolidate and regularize the taxes due to the Emperor and to take their collection out of the hands of the provincial governor and his assistants and to put it into the hands of officials of the Ministry of Finance. This naturally meant a good deal of confusion in the first year or two, as the older provincial functionaries were resentful, and the new central officials inexperienced, but in this matter, as in some others, the surprising thing is not the difficulties but the degree of success with which they appear to have been mastered and the relatively efficient working of some at least of the provincial treasuries. It appears that some of the best of the human material available for the new civil service was obtained by the Ministry of Finance.

The land-tax proclamation of 1942[2] enacted that the tax should be levied by collectors appointed by the Ministry of Finance. Its main provision was the levy of the following tax upon each *gasha* of land, this being a measurement which varies in different districts between 80 to 100 acres.

	$
On each *gasha* classified as fertile	15
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, semi-fertile	10
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, poor	5

In November 1944 was issued the important new land-tax proclamation[3] which was to lead to the immense increase of revenue from this source which has just been mentioned. It covered tithe as well as tax, the two being still distinguished. Owing to differences in the estimation of tithe, a fixed sum was assessed and thus, it appears, the great value

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[1] See below, pp. 277 ff.

[2] A Proclamation to Provide for a Tax on Land, No. 8 of 1942.

[3] Land-tax Proclamation, No. 70 of 1944.

Provinces.	Districts.	Rate of tax payable on each *gasha* of measured land.									Consolidated tax on unmeasured Gabar lands.		
		Fertile.			Semi-fertile.			Poor.					
		In lieu of Tithe.	In lieu of Tax.	Total.	In lieu of Tithe.	In lieu of Tax.	Total.	In lieu of Tithe.	In lieu of Tax.	Total.	In lieu of Tithe.	In lieu of Tax.	Total.
		$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
Shoa Harar Arusi Wallo	All Districts	35	15	50	30	10	40	10	5	15	8	12	20
Wallaga Sidamo Illubbabor Gamu-Gofa Kaffa	All Districts	30	15	45	30	10	40	10	5	15	8	12	20

of this form of tax, with its elasticity in relation to the fluctuations in productivity, has been lost. The tax is levied according to fertility and it is claimed that it applies to all land, whether cultivated or not.

There are two further points of interest in this law. One is that in the ancient provinces of Gojjam, Tigré, and Bagemdir these rates were not to apply, but the rates of tax due in 1927, plus the estimated tithe, were to be paid in money. The reasons for this distinction lie in the very complex traditional methods of paying tax. These are bound up with the greater sanctity and independence of the old land-holding and local government system and it was therefore inadvisable to make too sudden an attempt at centralization and uniformity in these, the most politically virile regions. Moreover, the land units in these provinces are, for the most part traditional units which have not been measured by the *gasha*. In Gojjam, for example, the tax was always levied upon the number of plough oxen instead of upon the land.

A second clause of interest ordered all those who claimed exemption of payment from tax to register their claims at the Ministry of Finance by a certain date, giving evidence to convince the minister of their validity. The significance of this step towards erasing the mosaic of privileges which history has designed in Ethiopia will be better understood when we consider this provincial system.

It would be interesting to make a comparison between the rates levied under these enactments and those in other African territories. Unfortunately, this is not easy. To begin with, the tax in British colonies is not levied on land but, for the most part, on adult males. Very few of these throughout British tropical Africa have the rights of usage over 100 acres of arable land, still less would the members of a single family, among people dependent upon the hoe, cultivate this area themselves. There are no figures available for a wide generalization, but in a given year, according to the amount of land available and the nature of the soil and the crop, the limits of land cultivated by one man and his family would range between about two and five acres. There would be a wide variation in the amount of land lying fallow which the family group, under the system of shifting cultivation, could claim successively to farm. (The biological family is, of course, not easily to be separated in this connection from the larger kinship groups which hold, and often cultivate, land together.) The rate of direct tax paid by the taxpayer in British African territories ranges from as low as 3s. or 4s. up to about £2. While it is almost impossible to generalize, since methods and rates vary so widely within the territories as well as between them, a bold guess would put the average paid by the tax-payer (in most cases an adult male) at about 12s. 6d. It would appear certain that the Ethiopian tax and tithe of between £1 10s. and £5 the *gasha*, must often, where the unit is worked by several families, be subdivided between them. The income tax of 10s. a year upon incomes between £30 and £50 seems, in this comparison, an indulgent rate.

CURRENCY

Currency in Ethiopia has a long but very broken, and, of late years, a somewhat troubled history. In the third to the sixth centuries of the Aksumite kingdom a gold coinage stamped with the royal image on the Roman model had been current in Ethiopia. Bronze coinage seems to have largely replaced the gold in the next two or three centuries and with the decline of the early civilization the use of coinage appears to have died out.[1] Alvarez found no money in use, exchange being made by barter with blocks of salt[2] while iron and lengths of cloth also came into use. Metal currency was used again in the nineteenth century and after about 1850 it was based upon silver, and the standard coin became the impressive and decorative Maria Theresa dollar which had long been current in the Levant. This was minted in Vienna until, in 1932, the Italians bought the master dies. They did not mint, however, until after their occupation and in the interval dollars were struck at the British Mint. The exchange rate with sterling has fluctuated considerably in recent years. In the Four Years' War it was at $4 to the £1, at the end of 1929 it was $13, in 1930 $20, and in 1931 it reached about $21. In 1934 it averaged about $12.

The dollar had something more than the token significance of coinage; it had not only great traditional importance in Ethiopian estimation, but its heavy proportion—ninety per cent—of silver gave it an intrinsic worth which fluctuated with the price of that metal. The dollar is an inconvenient and heavy coin; it weighs nearly an ounce and one mule is required to carry the equivalent of £200. So conservative were its Ethiopian users that a Menelik coin found little favour with them and he had to abandon the attempt to establish his own mint. There were divisionary silver and copper coins minted by Menelik, and in 1933 the present Emperor introduced a new series of these in copper and nickel upon the decimal system. The country people distrusted them and up to the time of the Italian invasion this coinage was not accepted outside Addis Ababa and one or two other towns. The same was true of some notes issued by the State Bank.

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[1] Kammerer, pp. 138–41.

[2] P. 407. Also Sillani, T., 'L'Affrika Orientale Italiana', *L'Impero*, Rome, 1937, p. 113.

The Italian Government instituted, as would be expected, an immediate and rigid control over the currency. The lira was introduced at a rate of five to the dollar, an artificial rate deliberately calculated to drive out foreign merchants. This was, as we have seen, with the help of other methods, largely achieved. But the people so distrusted the coinage of their conquerors that they were reluctant to exchange their produce for it and this was one reason for the fall in internal and external trade in the staple crops. The Italians therefore minted a new issue of dollars, which, it appears, in spite of the high quality of the later issues, were only grudgingly accepted.[1]

The reconquest of Ethiopia, mainly by the armies of the British Commonwealth, meant that the East African and Indian currencies came in alongside the Italian and Ethiopian. A large quantity of Maria Theresa dollars had been brought in for the support of the patriot movement. All these currencies were made legal tender according to fixed rates of exchange, and the establishment for a period of a branch of Barclays Bank in Addis Ababa greatly assisted in the stabilizing of the currencies and the fostering of trade. The rate for the dollar was fixed and maintained at 1s. 10d. throughout the period of British military administration, but the lira tended to fall below the rate of 480 to the £ at which it had been fixed.[2]

At the signing of the first agreement on the 31st of January 1942, the Emperor took over the control of the currency but, in order to facilitate the absorption of the British subsidies and promote trade with the surrounding territories, he agreed, in article IV, 'that in all matters relating to currency in Ethiopia the Government of the United Kingdom shall be consulted and that agreements concerning it shall be made only with the concurrence of that Government'. In the 1944 agreement (which did not prolong the British subsidy) this clause was dropped.

Speaking of the currency question, Mr. Bethell said:

'. . . the Ethiopian peasant will not sell his produce except against silver dollars. The thousands of Italian finance guards and the harshest repressive measures failed to cure him of that.

'On the other hand, exports have to be sold abroad in markets controlled by world levels for each particular article. The greater the value of the Maria Theresa dollar, the fewer the dollars which the Ethiopian export merchant can pay to the peasant for his produce. Below a certain Maria Theresa dollar figure, it does not pay the peasant to bring in his goods at all.'[3]

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[1] *Handbook*, pp. 114–15.

[2] Cmd. 6589/1945, pp. 9–10.

[3] Bethell, p. 197.

Currency difficulties have, without doubt, greatly distracted Ethiopia in her financial and economic recovery. The dollar was pegged at 2s. in 1943,[1] but in commercial transactions it had risen by the end of 1944 to 3s. The then commercial adviser considered this rise was due to action taken by the British military authorities in Nairobi, who withdrew the silver dollar reserve from Barclays Bank.[2] Lord Rennell, however, who was Chief Political Officer in the East African Command, maintains that the rise was due to the rise in the price of silver in the world markets. He points out that the tendency of a silver currency is for the coins to seep out of any area where it is in current use, and that this is true especially of Ethiopia, in view of the hoarding tendencies in some neighbouring countries. He states that the Emperor was urged at the discussions accompanying the agreement of 1942 to divorce the economy of Ethiopia from a silver currency with its attendant fluctuations.[3] This advice was not taken and, after many difficulties and discussions, which were complicated by the negotiations with Britain failing to eventuate in a continuation of British financial help, an arrangement was made with the American Government by which a large amount of silver was made over under 'lend-lease' to Ethiopia. This loan allowed the issue of a new currency.[4] It appears that this measure, in spite of doubts entertained in many quarters, has so far worked well. Copper coins of 1, 5, 10, and 25 cents have been issued, with a 50-cent silver coin. The notes are of 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, and 500 dollars. It is said that all these are now very generally accepted in the main centres and notes are current even in some quite small rural towns. Here is one more indication of the speed with which Ethiopian conservatism is crumbling away. The new currency is declared to be the only legal tender in Ethiopia and is said to be driving out the remaining East African shillings. The new dollar is officially stated to be equal to 5·52 grains of fine gold. It has a value at par of 10 to the pound sterling. It is claimed that the note issue has a 100 per cent cover in foreign currencies which it is hoped to turn into a gold cover. The currency fund is to be segregated from all other assets of the Ethiopian Government, and a statement about it is to be published twice a year in the *Gazette*. By this policy, in which Ethiopia has had the guidance of an American governor of the bank, it is claimed that the currency has acquired both stability and flexibility.[5]

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[1] Legal Notice, No. 13 of 1943.

[2] Bethell, p. 197.

[3] Letter from Lord Rennell in *East Africa and Rhodesia*, 16 November 1944, p. 250.

[4] Currency and Legal Tender Proclamation, 23 July 1945.

[5] *Herald*, 13 May 1946.

The latest opinion about the currency situation has come from the American governor of the State Bank. He pointed out that the loan from America will allow Ethiopia to make purchases in the United States during 1947 before the new International Monetary Fund, which she has joined, begins its operation. The provisions of the American loan to Britain would allow current sterling balances to be converted into currencies and make Ethiopia's position still more flexible. While admitting that the serious rise of prices in Ethiopia during 1946 had caused much public uneasiness, he put it down entirely to causes outside Ethiopian control, including the high freight on the railway, and claimed that the successful establishment of the new currency had helped Ethiopia to face her economic difficulties much better than most countries and 'with a success beyond the wildest hopes of most of us four years ago'.[1]

BANKING

The Bank of Abyssinia was set up in 1905 as the result of an agreement between Menelik and a European banking group in Egypt, which was behind the National Bank of Egypt. Their high hopes of business in Ethiopia were, after a few years' trial, severely disappointed. The bank just managed, however, to exist until the arrival of the railway at Addis Ababa in 1917 gave sufficient stimulus to trade to make it possible for the company to carry on, and to pay during its existence an average of four per cent to its shareholders. It is interesting to remark that, like the later coins, its notes, first printed in 1915, did not gain currency outside the towns as the suspicious country people clung to their heavy dollars.

Haile Selassié, as part of his modernizing and nationalist policy, decided to buy out the foreign company and substitute for it a purely Ethiopian institution. The National Bank of Egypt had now little interest in the venture and the negotiations were amicable; the English manager and most of the senior staff continued in office under the new régime. Thus the Bank of Abyssinia closed its doors on a Saturday in 1931, and on Monday the same doors were opened upon the Bank of Ethiopia, after a Sunday of no little activity for those who worked behind them. The price paid for assets and goodwill was about £235,000. All but a fraction of the new shares were taken by the government and the richer chiefs, and the bank was governed by a board upon which sat six Ethiopian officials, two leading merchants (one Armenian and one British Indian) the American financial adviser and the English governor.

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[1] *Herald* 28 October 1946.

The bank, in spite of its start at a very unfavourable economic moment, appears to have worked with harmony and efficiency, and might serve as an example of co-operation between Ethiopians and European experts. It also speaks very well for the British management that in the most critical periods of the war with Italy a small run on the bank was met dollar for dollar, and thereafter the bank kept its doors open and retained the confidence of its customers up to the fall of Addis Ababa.[1]

It has already been said that Barclays Bank opened a branch during the period of the occupation. A new State Bank of Ethiopia, in succession to the old one, was set up by proclamation[2] with a capital of $1,000,000 provided by the Ministry of Finance. The following year a charter was issued[3] which set up a board of between five and seven directors to administer the bank, including the president of the board and the governor of the bank. The statement issued by the bank in April 1944, given in East African shillings, showed the total assets and liabilities balancing at £1,583,000, while in 1945 the figure was £1,725,000. It is claimed for the bank that it follows a very conservative system of accounting, but is operating at a profit. The deposits during the calendar year 1943 averaged £112,500. There is a gradual increase in loans to the public and in 1944 it was stated that it was hoped to open a Loan and a Savings Account Department.[4]

The bank, which occupies a handsome modern building in Addis Ababa, has several branches in provincial centres. It deals in all kinds of banking business, and is the only bank in the country. Mr. Collier was again appointed governor of the bank, and after his death an American, Mr. G. A. Blowers, was given the post. It is understood that, no successor having been appointed to the British financial adviser, Mr. Blowers acts, whenever required, in this capacity.

The governor of the bank stated recently that Ethiopia was the first of the member nations to pay its contribution to the International Bank, sending gold to the United States for this purpose.[5]

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[1] This information was supplied by the late Mr. Collier, who was governor of the Bank of Ethiopia.

[2] A Proclamation to Provide for the Establishment of a State Bank, No. 21 of 1942.

[3] General Notice, No. 18 of 1943.

[4] *Review*, August 1944.

[5] *Review*, 28 October 1946.

CHAPTER TWELVE

SLAVERY[1]

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The traditional interest of the British people in slavery, following their own change of opinion upon this subject little more than a century ago, and the accusations brought by the Italians against Ethiopia upon this charge, have given a somewhat disproportionate prominence to this feature of Ethiopian society. This makes it all the more important that as just as possible an estimate should be made of the facts. Even after the events of 1935 and 1941 the problem of slavery with all its ramifications must remain an important though, it may be expected, a diminishing administrative problem. A brief account will therefore be given here of the history and character of slavery in Ethiopia and of the measures taken against it by the Emperor Haile Selassié in both parts of his reign.

Slavery has been an institution in Ethiopia from the earliest days of which we have record. It was an important feature of the social and economic organization of the country. Christianity, through most of its history, was not felt by the nations which professed it to be incompatible with slavery. Ethiopian Christianity was especially deeply imbued with Hebraic precepts which recognized slavery. From the earliest times the Ethiopians have considered it their right to enslave other races, on the grounds that, according to Mosaic law, they were entitled to reduce to bondage the negro and Hamitic tribes which were said to be descended from Ham, upon whom Noah bestowed a curse.[2] The Old Testament laid down:

'Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you, of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids.'[1]

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[1] This chapter was written in collaboration with Frank de Halpert, adviser to the Minister of the Interior, 1930–3. He remained in the country until after the Italian invasion.

[2] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, pp. 599 ff. See also the appendix upon slavery, vol. 2.

Travellers to Ethiopia who came from a Europe in which the abolition of slavery had not yet been exacted by the humanitarians naturally found no cause to comment upon this institution in Africa. The scant reference made to the subject suggests that they considered the slaves they saw to be reasonably well treated. Bruce, indeed, described the dreadful slave hunts into the country of the Shankalla or black people; the tribute of slaves sent in by all the governors and the ghastly massacres of adults when children were carried off. Yet he put up, in good, dry eighteenth-century terms, a defence for an institution which he knew to be under criticism at home. Doubtless it needed reform, but 'it cannot be anything but an indication of effeminacy and weakness at once to fall to the destruction of an object of that importance, without having first tried a reformation of those abuses which alone, in the minds of sober men, can make the trade exceptionable'.[2] The trade from the first seems to have been in the hands of Muslims who, beside their interest in commerce which the Ethiopians despised, had easy access to the great markets for slaves in neighbouring Muslim countries. It found its chief outlets by Massawa to Arabia and by Gallabat to the Sudan and Egypt.

Another reason which helped to perpetuate slavery in Ethiopia was the virtual encirclement of the country since the eighth century by Muslim states which, by their religion, were permitted to practise slavery. A great impetus was given to the trade in neighbouring Muslim countries by the invasion of Mohammed Grañ in the sixteenth century and by the fierce border wars that followed this event. To this day Arabia admits the status of slavery as legal and has taken many of its slaves from Ethiopia. It is not surprising, therefore, that Ethiopia should have remained the only Christian country to continue into this century the practice of slavery and that the church, like that of England through the greater part of its history, should have countenanced this institution. This attitude was strengthened by the fact that the New Testament does not expressly forbid slavery. In the *Fetha Nagast* it is proclaimed that all men were created free but that the laws of war allow the enslavement of captives. This code lays down provisions for the treatment of slaves and forbids the enslavement of Christians; it is said to be as a result of the latter provision that the Amharas made little active attempt to convert their neighbours.

It has certainly been the custom, and one which persisted through the reign of the Emperor Menelik (1889–1913), for Ethiopians to enslave their captives of war. Customary law laid down that captives should be liberated after seven years and that during that time they could not be sold but the law was gradually relaxed and captives were generally treated as ordinary slaves and were bought and sold freely. The Emperor Theodore (1855–68) was the first Ethiopian ruler to issue a decree suppressing the slave-trade. It is highly unlikely, with the increasing oppression and disorder of his reign, that it was ever widely enforced and, with the degeneration of his rule, the edict was forgotten. It is characteristic of this man of extremes that at one time he should have bought child slaves at his own expense in order to baptize and emancipate them. In 1875, Menelik, then king of Shoa, published a decree similar to that of Theodore, but this, too, remained a dead letter. Menelik at that time was already embarking upon the conquest of what is now southern Ethiopia as far as the Sudan and Kenya and during these expeditions many captives of war, both Galla and negro, were enslaved.

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[1] Leviticus, XXV, 44.

[2] Bruce, vol. 2, pp. 545–57.

In 1884 the Emperor John concluded a treaty with England by which he undertook, both for himself and on behalf of his successors, to prohibit slave-trading. In 1889, in the year of his coronation as Emperor of Ethiopia, Menelik issued another decree prohibiting Ethiopian Christians from selling and purchasing slaves. Both these measures were largely ineffective. Menelik continued his military expeditions in the south until 1898 and it is recorded that he brought back many slaves from them. Thus in 1894 when he conquered the kingdom of Walamo he brought back 1,800 slaves. The Emperor did not appear to consider that the edicts precluded him from making presents of slaves to his relatives and chiefs and he accepted convoys of negro prisoners from his generals. The slave-trade with Arabia also continued in Menelik's reign, although it decreased considerably when British naval patrols began to intercept dhows transporting slaves from Ethiopia to Arabia.[1] In 1923 Ethiopia, not without some misgivings upon her part as well as on the part of the British Government, was admitted to membership of the League of Nations and accepted the League's condition that she should endeavour to secure the complete suppression of slavery in all its forms.

THE SOURCES OF SUPPLY

The main sources of supply in recent times may be roughly demarcated as lying south and west of a line drawn from the point where the Blue

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[1] For a frank statement of the position under Menelik and subsequently, see Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, pp. 601 ff.

Nile leaves Ethiopia on the Sudan border to Moyale, on the Kenya border, and especially Maji, Gofa, Walamo, Shoa-Gimirra Gurafarda, and Kaffa. There is a mixture of tribes and races here, and, though the Hamitic Kaffa people were popular as slaves because of their docility and good looks, the negroes known in Ethiopia as Shankalla provided the largest and most popular source of supply. In addition to their strength and tractability, they had the added advantage that they could always be recognized if they escaped. At one time a lone negro, like a stray horse, would always be stopped and would be returned to his old master if he had escaped, or provided with a new one. A traveller describes the almost automatic way in which his Amhara escort flung themselves upon a negro who happened to cross their path and tied him up for return to his old owner or disposal to a new one. With the very large part played by negro armies in the liberation of Ethiopia and the presence of negro Americans holding highly responsible posts, we may assume that this attitude has been modified. It appears, however, that the contempt for 'slave-types' is still strong and freely uttered even in the capital.

The raiding of slaves in Ethiopia on a large scale had ceased in the last years before the Italian invasion, for the main reason that the countries which furnished slaves in the past had been depopulated by persistent raiding since their conquest by the Amharas in the last decade of the last century, though the Emperor's edicts against the slave-trade may have been a contributory cause to the decrease of raiding.[1] It would not be an exaggeration to say that in parts of the provinces of Kaffa and Maji, where much of the raiding had taken place in the past, the populations were in danger of extermination.

Eye-witnesses at Maji and at other places near the Sudan border stated that whole areas of the country had been completely devastated and that the remains of villages overgrown with bush could still be seen. The last consul at Maji before the invasion toured the country with a man who had known it consecutively for twenty years; from him he learnt that where formerly the population was dense not a human habitation was left. The figures collected showed that whereas in 1920 the number of taxpayers in Maji was estimated to be in the neighbourhood of 30,000 it had been reduced by 1935 to 780 taxpayers representing a population of 3,000 or 4,000 people. It was much the same in the neighbouring province of Kaffa. Here a well-populated and historic kingdom has been decimated and it was reported that in 1931 a forest ten or fifteen years old was to be seen along the track which formerly passed through cultivated fields.

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[1] There will be some further treatment of some aspects of the subject of this section below, pp. 319–34.

The raiding was carried out by the soldiery and by bandits, refusal to pay taxes and to give forced labour being made the pretext for expeditions which resulted in the enslavement of the recalcitrant taxpayers. Individual soldiers, turned bandits, made small raids of their own all over wide areas and found ready markets for their captives who were in great demand in the neighbouring Galla provinces of Jimma and Wallaga as well as further north in Gojjam. The governors condoned, if they did not actually sanction, slave-raiding. The slave-trade was an inducement to serve in these areas and for this reason chiefs posted there readily obtained recruits for their armies.

Although the Amharas joined in the slave trade, the more professional traders were generally Muslim Gallas who had specialized in this occupation for centuries. They knew well the established trade routes both in Ethiopia itself and across the Red Sea coasts to Arabia.

NUMBERS AND DISTRIBUTION

It is not possible to give an accurate estimate of the number of slaves in Ethiopia, since no census of the population nor of slaves has ever been taken. It is only possible to hazard a figure based on estimates of the population. These have varied between 6,000,000 and 12,000,000, and on the basis of 8,000,000 it might be estimated that there were in Ethiopia in 1935 between 300,000 and 500,000 slaves. The Italians claim to have liberated 420,000 in the main slavery provinces but they might be tempted to overestimate the numbers. On the other hand it is interesting and surprising to find that Mérab, the Emperor Menelik's doctor, could estimate that in 1929 a quarter, or even a third, of the population were slaves.[1]

The extent of slave-owning varied in different parts of the country. Slaves were owned by Amharas and Gallas alike, as well as by others of the many groups of which Ethiopia is composed, not excluding, as will be shown later, those who were themselves subjected to slavery by their neighbours. Rases, military leaders, and officials and even hereditary chiefs of the Gallas and some other subject groups were the large slave owners. Ras Hailu may be cited as an example of the first class. He was the hereditary ruler of Gojjam and when, upon his deposition in 1933, the present Emperor ordered that his slaves should be freed, he was found to possess some 3,000. The Galla ruler of Jimma was said to have owned a like number. An Italian observer estimated in 1936 that one fifth of the population of Gondar were slaves. He notes that in all important marriages some slaves were added to the cattle and other goods which made up the dowry, and that any *fitaurari* would regard at least seven slaves as a necessary accompaniment of his rank, while a local *dejazmach* he knew had many hundreds, two thirds of whom were female. Slaves in small numbers were employed in many modest households, where they helped their masters in the house as well as in the fields.[1] A traveller in the south in 1933, upon whose information the writer was able to draw, describes a peasant family, which owned a slave-family: the two appeared to him indistinguishable in their huts, clothes, and way of living.

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[1] Mérab, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 131.

It is not possible to say with accuracy to what extent slaves were employed in different parts of Ethiopia. The following examples, however, may give some idea of their distribution.

The people of the Galla provinces of Jimma and Wallaga in western Ethiopia and their Galla neighbours employed many slaves on the land and large numbers were employed in coffee plantations in the west. In Beni-Shangul on the Sudan frontier slave-owning flourished, whereas the more primitive southern Boran Gallas on the Kenya frontier were not slave-owners, since their country was sparsely cultivated and the people, living a hard semi-nomadic life, could ill afford the luxury of owning slaves. The same could be said of the other nomad peoples, although some of their chiefs who had acquired a more civilized mode of life might own a few slaves. In Harar province as a whole, the Galla population were not slave-owners. The mixed people of Harar town owned slaves but as the sale had become restricted they retained their own slaves and their slaves' children. On the other hand the Amhara soldiers who occupied the province on behalf of the central government owned many slaves and it was considered that even after the prohibition of slave-dealing a certain amount of traffic went on underground to supply their needs.

In Wallo, the partly Galla province in the north-east situated between Shoa and Tigré, there were large numbers of slaves. The country was formerly entirely Muslim and the general attitude of the people was predisposed to the ownership of slaves. It was, moreover, well placed for the slave-trade with Arabia, being situated on the escarpment overlooking the Danakil desert which lies between it and the Red Sea. In 1935 Mr. Steer, when passing through Wallo, met an old Muslim Galla who complained that slaves, which had cost only sixty dollars each in *Negus* Mikael's time, were now worth double. He could remember when the caravans of slave-dealers passed up and down his valley. But now, he said, it was necessary to buy secretly, generally from amongst children born in slavery, since detection might be heavily punished.[1]

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[1] Lauro, R. di, *Tre anni a Gondar*, Milan, 1936, pp. 101 ff. This book contains one of the few detailed recent studies of slavery, and although, in using it, allowance must be made for the writer's prejudices, there are signs of objectivity in treatment. Any points derived from this source are noted as such

Further north, slave-owning diminished as the distances from the slave areas of the south increased and the riches of the soil diminished. Gojjam was sufficiently fertile and close to the source of supply to employ many slaves, but there were fewer north of Lake Tana, because the country was not so fertile and the cultivators could not afford slaves. It was, therefore, seldom that slaves were to be seen tilling the land in these parts, although in the towns of Gondar and Debra Tabor large numbers of slaves were owned by the officials and priesthood. In Tigré, the province bordering Eritrea, there were said to be fewer slaves than in any part of Ethiopia, and Ras Seyum, contrary to the practice of other great nobles, was said to possess but few slaves.

THE TRADE TO ARABIA

It has always been very difficult to obtain information about the slave-trade with Arabia. As long as the status of slavery is allowed to exist in Arabia so long will the sale of slaves to that country continue. The trade undoubtedly decreased in the thirties, but there was no evidence that it ceased and it is probable that a certain number of slaves were still smuggled in dhows which plied among the islands and between the unfrequented creeks along the desert coasts of the Red Sea. The responsibility for the continuance of this traffic must be shared by the European Powers through whose territories traders were obliged to pass. It must be admitted, however, that the torrid and little-inhabited Danakil coastal desert, which made the last stage of the journey, was not easy to police.

British naval patrols in the Red Sea were always on the look-out for slave-dhows, but the last time such a dhow was seen was in 1922. It must, however, be remembered that the Red Sea has many islands conveniently situated for slave-dhows and their interception during their dashes by night from one island to another was a difficult matter. In 1933 the chief officer of a merchant ship approached within a few hundred yards of what he considered to be a slave-dhow making for the

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[1] Steer, *Caesar in Abyssinia*, p. 218.

Arabian coast and he made a statutory declaration to this effect to the Anti-Slavery Society.

CHARACTER OF ETHIOPIAN SLAVERY

As the previous section suggests, the use of slaves on the land was most extensive in the more fertile districts of the south. Everywhere, however, slaves were employed in the households of all who could afford them. A great deal of labour was required, especially in the larger households where many guests were entertained, in collecting firewood, cutting hay, tending animals, brewing mead, grinding corn, making bread, and drawing water. Some slaves became skilled workers, the women as spinners and basket makers and the men as workers in wood or metal. In some places it was usual for slave-owners to hire out their slaves, and we are told of an Italian trader, in Gondar, representative of a commercial company, who thus obtained the services of many slaves.[1]

Slavery in Africa was probably nowhere so rigid and harsh as that imposed by Europeans upon their plantation gangs in the New World. It is almost impossible to generalize about Ethiopia but instances could be given of kindly and generous masters as well as of brutal ones. Di Lauro's opinion confirms that of other observers that slaves were not, on the whole, badly treated; they were too precious for that. In Gondar they were given meat on feast days with a glass of beer or mead and every year a new white cotton gown. Nothing could alter, however, the inevitably degrading results, both to master and to slave, of treating human beings as chattels. The period of greatest suffering in a slave's life, however, was that before he found a permanent master. The callous cruelty which was employed in capturing a slave and disposing of him often left an indelible mark on him. A bad master might beat or chain his slaves but they could take their grievances to the courts and, though the scales of justice were generally weighted against them, a forceful slave before a good judge might obtain redress.

THE REFORMS OF 1924–35

The doubts about the entry of Ethiopia into the League of Nations related to her ability to carry out the obligations of a member-state, especially with regard to slavery. This was felt with great strength by Britain with her anti-slavery tradition. It was due to these doubts that Ethiopia's application in 1919 was rejected. Upon the next attempt three years later, there was again opposition, and the Foreign Secretary reported to the House of Lords on the 30th of July 1923 that, when the British minister had asked the Regent if he would accept aid from the League of Nations in suppressing slavery, he had given a negative reply. However, in spite of this, Ethiopia was admitted in September 1923, and in doing so she accepted the 1919 Convention of Saint Germain by which she promised to 'make particular efforts to ensure the suppression of slavery in all its forms and also the trading in negroes on land and sea'. Furthermore she declared her readiness to 'furnish the Council with all the information desired'.

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[1] di Lauro, *op. cit.*, p. 107

Three years later an international Slavery Convention was drawn up and Ethiopia was a signatory, but, in spite of repeated requests from the Secretary-General, she never ratified this adherence. She could thus be regarded as having broken the understanding upon which she was admitted to the League.

How far did Ethiopia carry out her specific obligations? The first action of the Ethiopian Government was to issue a proclamation which is interesting because of the light it throws upon the contemporary attitude towards slavery while it also contains some valuable evidence about the facts. Issued over the names of the Empress Zawditu and the Regent Ras Tafari on the 15th of September 1923, the first part runs as follows:

'His Majesty the Emperor Menelik II many times made proclamations against the trade in slaves, saying let none sell or buy a man as a slave, and since then many other such-like proclamations have been made. The cause of these proclamations and the reason why some men were declared slaves were that certain nations were at war with us, and this had caused money to be spent which these nations had to repay by their labour, and this, also, that they might learn virtue by communication with Christians. Now it seems that you break these proclamations, and go forth of your own wills to spoil other lands and to carry off men that you may sell them as slaves. If these men obey, you keep them in slavery, and if they obey not, you slay them. Now if any man be found to commit such offences, know you that such a man will be condemned to die. If anyone be found who has been taken from his country as a slave after this proclamation was made, such a one shall be asked the name of his country, and the Governor of such country shall have to pay a fine of 1,000 dollars for each slave, and the headmen and the chiefs shall each pay 500 dollars. From now and hereafter anyone who has been taken from his country as a slave shall receive a warrant of freedom, and he shall have the right to return to his own land.'[1]

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[1] Cmd. 2553/1925, pp. 6–7.

This proclamation covered only one type of slave and was hardly an adequate fulfilment of the government's new obligations. In 1924, the year following the admission to the League, a new slavery law, dated the 31st of March 1924,[1] was promulgated, and this was communicated to the League.[2] Among its principal provisions were the following:

Slaves born since the date of the law, i.e. the 31st of March 1924, were to be free, but should remain under their master's care until they reach the age of fifteen.

Slaves were to be freed on their master's death but might not leave their master's family for a period of seven years.

The purchase and sale of slaves were forbidden and a slave proving that he had been sold was entitled to his freedom.

There was to be a census and register of slaves, and schools for freed slave-children.

If cruelty to a slave were proved, he was entitled to be freed. Freedom was decreed also to women slaves who bore children to their masters and to men who fought as soldiers or became priests or deacons.

Runaway slaves might claim their freedom if not claimed by their masters within a certain time.

There were to be slave-judges at the capital and two for each province.

It was one thing to draw up these measures on paper and quite another to enforce them. No information was furnished to the League until September 1927, when a list of freed slaves was sent, and similar communications were made in 1928 and 1930. In 1925 the Temporary Slavery Committee, a very experienced body of which Lord Lugard was a member, invited Ethiopia to consider some very moderate steps in order to meet her obligations to the League. These were, that the principal chiefs should set an example by liberating their own slaves; that there should be a registration of slaves and the liberation of those who, after a certain date, had not been registered, or alternatively that slavery as a legal status should be abolished with the proviso that freed slaves should continue to serve for a fixed period. These suggestions were ignored.[3] Representations by the British Government, which was troubled by the incessant reports of slave-raiding on its common frontier with Ethiopia, had received no more satisfaction. When the British minister in 1924 protested to the Regent, 'after prolonged delay and repeated reminders', he received a reply that 'the matter was an internal concern of the Abyssinian Government respecting which they did not feel called upon to furnish information'.[1]

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[1] Quoted in appendix II to Sandford.

[2] League of Nations Paper, A.19, 1925, VI.

[3] For a translation of the Abyssinian report on slavery see League of Nations Paper, C. 209.M.66, 1924, VI.

In 1930, however, the Emperor yielded so far to British pressure as to appoint, through the intermediary of the British Government, an Englishman, Mr. de Halpert, as adviser to the Minister of the Interior. It was to be his special function to advise upon anti-slavery measures. In August of the following year, the Emperor issued an edict supplementing the law of 1924. It modified the provision of the previous law which obliged a slave to remain with the family of his deceased master for seven years and declared instead that the slave should be free on his master's death. It also provided for the registration of slaves. Moreover, unlike the earlier act, it looked forward in its final words to the eventual abolition of the institution of slavery which, presumably, would come about when the last slave-owner should die.

It might have been expected that the penal code, drawn up in 1930 and issued in 1932, would in view of the Emperor's obligations and enactments have covered slavery in its list of crimes and punishments. There are some rather obscure clauses (374–80) referring to seizing, detaining, and binding men but these would have a very uncertain reference to most aspects of raiding for slaves or trading in them. Nor does the constitution, drawn up at much the same time, make any reference to this subject. Clearly all the rights of Ethiopian citizens which are listed in it cannot apply to the numerous classes which lay below this rank.

In 1932, with the consent of the Emperor Haile Selassié, the Anti-Slavery Society sent a mission composed of Lord Noel-Buxton and Lord Polwarth to Addis Ababa to discuss the question of the progressive abolition of slavery. These delegates were able to obtain from the Emperor little more than his general assurance that he would abolish slavery altogether within a period of fifteen or at most twenty years. They failed to get him to agree to the abolition of the legal status; to the acceptance of a League of Nations adviser, or even to an unofficial observer. They had pressed these last two measures because they realized that the British adviser, being in the employment of the Emperor, was in a very difficult position.

Shortly after the departure of the mission, a special slavery department was set up under progressive officials, one of whom, when holding a post in a remote province, spent his spare time in translating *Uncle Tom's Cabin* from French into Amharic, a spontaneous and remarkable achievement. The slavery department began its activities by increasing the number of slavery courts in the provinces to sixty-two. Plans were elaborated to register slaves, to raise special anti-slavery police, and to provide for freed slaves.

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[1] Cmd. 2553/1925, p. 13.

RESULTS OF THE REFORMS

Before attempting to estimate results, it is only just to make full allowance for the obstacles in the way of reform. Chief among them was the unreadiness of the people for drastic change in this direction. The Emperor, Dr. Martin[1] and a few progressive younger men alone recognized any need for reform. Even some of the younger men, as nationalists, denied, in their resentment at foreign interference, the justice of criticism on this ground. To the people as a whole slavery was a law of nature; to many it appeared to be an economic necessity. In endeavouring to abolish slavery the Emperor had agreed to act against the opinion of the majority of his people in spite of the weakness of the central government and the lack of communications along which to make its writ effective. The agents appointed by the Emperor to carry out these reforms, if they showed too much zeal, were sometimes actually in danger of their lives. One, who fled after receiving six bullet wounds, was unable to get any help or redress from the government authorities in Jimma. Many provincial governors were too deeply involved in slavery themselves to assist in its suppression and, even if this had not been so, their retainers and soldiers might have drifted away from a reforming governor. The church, in which priests and monks were considerable slave-owners, appears to have been almost solidly against change in this direction. The Emperor, indeed, for reasons dictated mainly by his foreign policy and his desire to gain entry to the League, had, like some of his predecessors, promised a great deal more than he could easily perform.

It does not seem, however, even allowing for these difficulties, that a sufficiently vigorous and sustained lead was given to public opinion from the palace, even as regards the headquarters administration. The impetus which the department had received from the Emperor after the Noel-Buxton mission did not last long; on the contrary a definite set-back took place. Opposition to the reforming activities of the new department soon took shape and friction occurred between conservative and progressive elements in the department itself. The progressive assistant to the head of the department was arrested at the instigation of his own director and detained for eight months without trial, after which he was declared innocent and released. The director, instead of being punished, was made governor of an important province. Control of anti-slavery activities ceased and work in the department came to a standstill. The slavery department had become a department only in name, shorn of authority and respect. The paralysis at headquarters was reflected in the provinces, where the anti-slavery laws were, to all practical purposes, a dead letter.

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[1] Azaj Werkene was known to Europeans as Dr. Martin. He had been picked up as a child by the Napier expedition and had been educated in India as a doctor

The belief that the reforms were not being supported with the necessary determination led to the resignation, by way of protest, of the British adviser in 1933. Matters did not improve after this. It was the opinion of the British Consul in Maji that during his five years' tenure of this post, from 1931 until the Italian invasion, in spite of all his efforts the situation, far from improving, was actually growing worse. Cases of kidnapping, leading to murder upon resistance, were reported. The local people themselves were driven to catching their neighbours and selling them into slavery in order to obtain rifles to defend themselves or to carry on their own slave-hunting more effectively. The neighbouring provinces, Gimirra and Gurafarda, under *Dejazmach* Taye, the Emperor's banished kinsman, were centres for the trade. In 1934 the British Consul at Goré bore witness to the movement of several gangs of slaves, including one numbering ninety, while a new governor of Goré, sent to remedy the situation, declared that it was not possible to take action against Amhara officials who collected slaves on their visits to the west. It was easier and less unpopular to take action against traders and kidnappers who were generally Muslim or members of subject races. In 1935 it was reported that the traffic in slaves flourished in the province of Beni-Shangul near the Sudan border. The local soldiers were allowed to defy the government, while a notorious slave-trader was acquitted and enabled to return to Maji. Two strong protests were made to the Emperor by the British Government in 1934.

In spite of all this it is not to be assumed that the Emperor's policy produced no results at all. There are several items to be entered upon the other side of the account. One is that the reforming Ras Imru brought a new tone into Gojjam when he succeeded Ras Hailu in 1932. Dr. Martin introduced reforms into Chercher, and the suppression of the Jimma dynasty at least drove the notorious slave-trade of this province underground, though it is known that even in 1934 the slaves were still sent, tied neck to neck in single file, along a secluded route parallel with the main road. This evidence from official reports is confirmed by an English traveller in 1933, who, though he found much evidence of kidnapping and slave-trading in the south, reported that the knowledge that this had now been decreed a crime by the Emperor had forced the slave-traders to leave the roads and to camp by day in the forests, travelling by night, when it was difficult and dangerous to attack them. This at least meant, as Mrs. Sandford argues upon other evidence, that the public slave-markets had been forced to close.[1] Indeed, the official condemnation of slave-trading led—though this was hardly an advantage—to a conspiracy of silence before Europeans upon all subjects connected with slavery.

Other influences had begun to work in the directions of the reforms. In Addis Ababa itself, although just before the Italian invasion a Turkish lady explained how easily she could obtain a slave-child there for £5 as a birthday present for her husband, the high cost of living and the increasing number of free workers available had begun to make slavery uneconomic. Di Lauro's evidence is that by the thirties nothing approaching recognized slave-markets existed anywhere; that no slave-traders could live exclusively upon this trade but only by combining it with other traffic; that economic forces had worked concurrently with the imperial prohibition to lessen the number of slaves so that they had become a luxury. The castration of negro boys to serve as eunuchs in attendance upon wives and concubines which had led to high prices for those who survived the operation, had almost ceased, except to meet the demands of a few great chiefs.[2]

Finally, as the Italian menace grew, the Emperor, in his need to retain the sympathy of the British Government, at last gave in to the long-sustained pressure of His Majesty's minister, and showed greater activity with regard to slavery. In August 1934 he sent a report to the League of Nations stating that the local anti-slavery bureaux set up in 1932 had freed 3,647 slaves and convicted 293 persons of anti-slavery offences. In Goré, near the Sudan border, late in 1935, at the eleventh hour of the old Ethiopian régime, a progressive slavery official was appointed who, announcing that he had strong orders from the Emperor, held a public ceremony in the market-place at which he freed 105 slaves and exhibited thirty-five slave-traders, loaded with chains. Much more important as a practical measure, in the following year the Emperor appointed a reforming governor to Maji with Colonel Sandford as his adviser. Although he arrived there only after the Italians had begun their invasion, under firm and humane administration good results were soon reported. 'The natives are wild with joy,' wrote the British consul. 'They no longer consider themselves the serfs or personal slaves of the Maji soldiery and officials.' The Emperor also at this eleventh hour invited the former British adviser to return and reorganize the administration of the country round Goré, thus linking it in his programme of reform with Maji; but the proposal came too late, since the Italians had begun the war and Mr. de Halpert was already with the Red Cross. Thus the measures for the abolition of slavery in these notorious provinces, so often urged by the British minister and so long delayed, were belatedly begun and soon interrupted.

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[1] Sandford, p. 50.

[2] di Lauro, *op. cit.*, pp. 106 ff.

In reviewing the history of slavery and the measures taken against it before 1935, it is difficult not to agree with the opinion of the British Anti-Slavery Society, which has never relaxed its interest in this subject, in a statement sent to the Foreign Office in 1943. 'The record of the progress made by Ethiopia prior to 1935 to abolish slavery does not encourage the hope that abolition of slavery will be actively pursued unless external persuasion is applied to stimulate efforts to that end.' Those who defend Ethiopia in this matter point out the very great difficulties, in her special conditions, of enforcing abolition and also the view of experienced British administrators, such as Lord Lugard, that an abrupt abolition may be disruptive to the social and economic conditions and harmful to the slaves themselves. The answer to this is twofold. It is that, even granting all the difficulties and without expecting immediate and sweeping results, insufficient activity, and especially insufficient continuity of action, was shown in a matter deeply touching the honour and status of the country. The decline in activity in the middle thirties and certain retrogressive actions taken or allowed by the government at that time appear to be a valid ground for criticism. It was also felt in anti-slavery circles in Britain that the Emperor might have put the crown upon all his other reforming efforts by publicly freeing all slaves on his own lands in some way that would have influenced opinion in the country. If, on the other hand, Ethiopians and their supporters in this controversy wish to prove that nothing more could have been done in the eleven years following 1923 to fulfil the country's obligations to the League, to supply information and to accept expert advice, then there can be only one conclusion. It is that Ethiopia, since she was not able adequately to fulfil the promises she made in order to gain membership of the League, had asked for a status which she was not yet ready to occupy.

THE ITALIAN OCCUPATION

Obscurity hangs over the character and results of the Italian régime. This is due to the policy of the conquerors in excluding all but notably pro-Italian foreigners; to the subsequent erasure of their work through reconquest and also to the efforts of Ethiopian propaganda following the reconquest. It is, therefore, not very easy to reconstruct Italian achievements with exactitude. This is especially true of any controversial matters such as slavery.

It is not difficult to discover the professed intentions and the legislation of the Italians. Condemnation of Ethiopian slavery had been a lurid theme in Italian propaganda leading up to the war and the aggressors seem to have thought that it might have some value internally in Ethiopia if it could be used to drive a wedge between the classes. Accordingly at the very inception of the campaign, de Bono issued an anti-slavery proclamation. Then, as each province was seized, the liberation of all slaves was proclaimed. A decree was issued from Asmara confirming abolition for the whole of Tigré in October 1935. This decree abolished the legal status of slavery; declared that all slaves should be freed immediately and threatened all persons guilty of any offences against personal freedom with punishments provided in the penal code.[1] A further decree promulgated by Badoglio in April 1936 from Makale extended the liberation to Amhara and Gojjam. The texts of these laws were communicated to Geneva and they were gradually extended to the whole country.[2]

It is much more difficult to evaluate the means by which these laws were actually carried out. The Italian reports upon their own work claim that very large and humane administrative efforts were made to adjust the lives of the slaves to freedom. Some were allowed to remain with their old masters on métayer contracts supervised by the Italian authorities; others were settled on individual holdings; others found their way home or went into trade. An experiment in communal settlements known as 'Villages of Liberty' was made; in these, it is claimed, ploughs, oxen, and seeds were provided and great success was attained. The Consolata mission carried out some of these experiments in Kaffa, others were carried out, or perhaps only planned, in the newly defined provinces of Galla-Sidamo and Amhara. No reliable estimates of the numbers freed are available, though it was stated in 1936 that in Galla-Sidamo, the focus of the old trading, 400,000 were released and that 20,000 were found in Harar alone. It was claimed that 125,000 freed slaves were placed in 'Villages of Liberty' or agricultural settlements of which there were 165 in the country.[3]

The Italians might, like other totalitarian states, have introduced forced labour even while they advertised their suppression of slavery. Here, too, the evidence is fragmentary. In 1935 Italy ratified the convention on forced labour in colonial territories drawn up through the work of the International Labour Office and introduced the consequent legislation. As this convention does not prohibit the use of forced labour for urgent public works, and as little or no outside observation of its fulfilment was possible, it would not be difficult for the Italians to drive something larger than loopholes through its provisions. Forced, though not necessarily always unpaid, labour was undoubtedly used upon the roads and upon the plantations in Somaliland. Some remarks made in this last connection by General Teruzzi, after visiting Somaliland in 1940, reveal very significantly the Italian attitude in this question. 'Action on the labour problem in Somaliland is urgent. If to obtain labour it is necessary to run counter to those relics of colonial mentality according to which everything pertaining to the native population is sacred and must not be touched without incurring the risk of who knows what dangers; if, we say, a little discipline is introduced, just that discipline which we impose on our own nationals, well, that discipline has been imposed. Somalia cannot be allowed to stagnate or recede.'[1] British officers who took part in the conquest of Italian Somaliland report that nothing more nor less than a very brutal type of slave labour existed on the plantations.[2]

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[1] de Bono, *op. cit.*, pp. 251–2.

[2] League of Nations Paper, C.189(1).M.145, 1936, VI, p. 7.

[3] From unpublished official reports. See also Francolini, *op. cit.*, Part IV, pp. 328 ff.

On the other hand there is some evidence to show that in Ethiopia proper, where the tradition against wage-labour of this kind was not so rigid as among the Somalis, reasonable wages were generally paid for work on roads and other public construction. Europeans who were in Ethiopia in the early stages of the operations have reported that the loss of these opportunities for working for wages was one of the aspects of Italian rule which was missed. It is certain that the widespread demand for labour caused by the expensive and almost feverish development programme of the Italians, with recruitment to the native levies, must have gone far to meet the great difficulties which abrupt and general liberation from slavery must impose upon an economically backward country. We must also reckon with the possibility that in the many areas which to the end lay outside direct Italian administrative control the decrees of liberation were either unknown or ignored. Even within the zones where their authority could be enforced it is not likely that the Italians, with their growing anxieties, followed up their earlier gestures with the humane and laborious efforts which would have been required to push this reform through to complete fulfilment. On the other hand we shall probably be right to assume that the effect of what was achieved, in spite of its limitations, and above all the introduction of wage-labour on a large scale, dealt a further blow to an institution already weakened by the previous reforms of the Emperor and that his task, when he returned to it in 1941, was very much easier than that presented to him either as Regent or as newly-crowned Emperor.

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[1] *Giornale d'Italia*, 17 March 1940. Also from Dr. L. P. Mair's unpublished material.

[2] Verbal evidence given to the writer.

POSITION SINCE THE RESTORATION

Very little information has been available about slavery since the return of the Emperor. Most Europeans who have visited the country have gathered little evidence upon the subject. This may be interpreted as meaning that slavery has, at the best, greatly decreased; we must consider presently whether it can be interpreted as meaning anything more than this. From the legal side there is news of the courts inflicting heavy penalties for slavery offences, while recent witnesses who have visited Ethiopian prisons have reported the presence there of offenders against the anti-slavery laws.

The most important event has been the issue of a proclamation,[1] the main purpose of which was to abolish the legal status of slavery. The preamble of the law begins with the words, 'Whereas it has always been Our desire to abolish the institution of slavery in Our Empire'. The definition of slavery is 'the condition or status of a person over whom any or all of the rights attaching to the right of ownership are exercised'. 'Slave dealing' is also defined to cover all aspects of the acquisition, sale, or exchange of slaves in the way of trade. The central clause (no. 3), abolishes the legal status; clause 4 enacts either the death penalty or penalties rising to twenty years' imprisonment, forty lashes or $10,000 fine, or any combination of these, for transporting or trading in slaves. The Emperor's two main proclamations during his first régime are re-enacted in so far as they are not inconsistent with the new law.

Several references have been made to this question of the legal status, the abolition of which was achieved by this law, and to those unfamiliar with the more recent history of slavery, especially in British territories, its importance may not be clear. The leading theme of Lord Lugard, who was in this century at once the leading agent in the suppression of slavery and the leading authority upon the subject, was that a law enacting compulsory emancipation was the worst way of dealing with the problem. It must remain a dead letter or else, if enforced, produce chaos. 'By a decree of compulsory emancipation . . . it is a crime for a master to retain his slaves and whether they wish it or not they must be turned into the street to become vagrants without any means of subsistence, or thieves, and the women prostitutes.'[1] The advantage of abolishing the legal status is that no master can thereafter lawfully hold his slaves against their will; if for reasons of cruelty or other good cause they desire their freedom they can apply to the courts for it, and conversely no master can apply to the courts for the return of a runaway slave. This leads to a gradual emancipation in which contented slaves and those who could find no other livelihood elect to stay with their masters who, upon their side, realize that bad treatment will result in their loss. The Ethiopian law of 1942, therefore, when read beside the legislation which prevented any new slaves being created by force, acquisition, or birth, deals with this evil in the best possible way, by abolishing the legal status.

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[1] A Proclamation to Provide for the Abolition of the Legal Status of Slavery and Certain Other Matters, No. 22 of 1942.

It has not been possible to obtain information about the effectiveness of this law or the general situation with regard to slavery since the restoration. It is known that heavy penalties, including death, have been enforced against slave dealers; offenders against the slavery laws have most certainly met with punishment, and it appears that in the main centres to which Europeans have access there is little overt sign of slave-trading.

In answering a deputation from the Anti-Slavery Society on the 20th of February 1946, Mr. C. D. Howe, who held the post of British minister in Ethiopia, stated that he believed that the situation had greatly improved and that this was due to the steps taken by the Italians. He maintained that British patrols in the Red Sea would check any slave-carrying ships.[2] As for slavery itself, it is certain that, as in British territories in which the legal status was abolished many years ago, there are still slaves who remain with their owners, especially in the households of the great, where it becomes impossible to distinguish, in the crowds of hangers-on, between servants, pages, freed slaves, and unpaid servants.[3] It should therefore not be expected that slavery has completely disappeared from Ethiopia and statements to that effect should be discounted. What should be hoped for is that, owing to the new laws and the new economic forces and ideas, the institution will gradually die out with the surviving slaves.

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[1] From unpublished notes written by Lord Lugard for communication to the Ethiopian authorities. See also his *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 1922, chapters XVII and XVIII.

[2] From a report of the meeting in the records of the Anti-Slavery Society.

[3] This was certainly true of the households of Nigerian potentates visited by the writer.

The same is true of slave-trading. Here, too, the experience in British territories where the government takes the strongest possible line shows that it is no easy task to eradicate a system which does not offend the principles of the people and in the continuance of which certain groups have the deepest interest. In the Sudan, for instance, in the nineteen-thirties, it was suddenly discovered not only that slavery was still practised, but that this, in partnership with Ethiopians, was being carried on upon a large and organized scale. In Nigeria even to-day cases of pawning and kidnapping occur from time to time. When it is realized how difficult it must be to investigate all the children accompanying a trading caravan through the vast forested regions of southern Ethiopia and to intercept small dhows sailing across the Red Sea, it will be admitted that generalization is in this matter impossible.

The Ethiopians, moreover, are if anything more sensitive than ever upon this question and inquisitive European questioners or travellers are most unlikely to obtain or to see any evidence about it. Anti-slavery circles in England have tried to urge the British Government to maintain its former pressure in this matter and some have urged that conditions with regard to slavery measures should be added to the agreements by which Britain gave subsidies and other assistance. The Foreign Office evidently decided against this procedure and preferred to trust the Emperor. It is impossible for the writer of this chapter to offer any further comment upon the present situation. One can only hope and expect with all those in Britain who regard slavery as one of the worst blots upon the reputation of any nation that the Emperor's laws and policy are leading rapidly to its extinction in Ethiopia and that no decline in the power or the will of the central government will lead to its recrudescence.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

HEALTH AND EDUCATION

HEALTH BEFORE 1935

Those who have any knowledge of the social and economic backwardness of tropical Africa, and of the large scientific and administrative efforts which this has demanded from European authorities, will inquire with interest how similar conditions have been handled by a purely African government. For, in spite of their ancient civilization and the advances made by their government in certain directions, most of the peoples of Ethiopia share with other Africans their primitive standards of health, housing, education, and methods of production. Compared with what has been achieved in these spheres by European governments in Africa—and that, in relation to the need, is little enough—the Ethiopian Government, lacking both the knowledge and the administrative power, had done even less. All that can be recorded here of the period up to the Italian invasion are the merest beginnings in health and education services by the two reforming Emperors. So little has been achieved in any other sphere of social welfare that, even in dealing with the latest period, attention need be directed only towards the two services of health and education.

It is impossible to write about the health and medical services of Ethiopia except in the most fragmentary and provisional terms. No general survey of the health of the people has ever been made, but, upon a superficial view, they suffered from the usual ailments of unreformed tropical conditions, especially, it appears, from malaria, helminthic diseases, and typhus. Leprosy was another obvious evil and large numbers of lepers were to be seen in the capital. An interesting story is told of their fears caused by the belief that the Emperor Theodore had once ordered mass executions of the lepers. When it was found necessary in Haile Selassié's time to destroy some horses of the Imperial Guard which had developed anthrax, the Addis Ababa lepers petitioned the Emperor to cancel the order on the grounds that it was wrong for man deliberately to destroy any of God's creatures. The Emperor withdrew the order against the wishes of the European military mission, and sent the horses into the country.

There is little to be said about the situation before 1935, except to list the efforts that had been made by missionaries and by the government.

Amongst the earliest successful attempts to introduce European medicine into Ethiopia was that of Swedish missionaries who started educational and medical work in Eritrea in 1866, in northern Ethiopia in 1870, and in Harar in 1903. The first hospital to be opened in the capital was the work of the Russian Red Cross. At the time of the battle of Aduwa, Russia had sent medical aid to those whom they regarded as being very near to them in religion. From these beginnings the Menelik hospital developed under the government.[1]

The Ministry of the Interior, first set up by Menelik, was given the function of dealing with public health and, in Haile Selassié's first period of rule, a medical commission of two or three officials and doctors was put in charge of such matters as the control of doctors, veterinary surgeons, and chemists, and inspection of the sale of drugs. The municipality of Addis Ababa maintained a chemical laboratory and a qualified German chemist carried out government analyses.

The official medical efforts which elsewhere have generally started in the African capitals had in Ethiopia by 1935 gone little further than Addis Ababa, which city was, perhaps, almost too lavishly provided in relation to the rest of the country. Menelik's hospital, struggling against lack of funds and staffing difficulties, nevertheless dealt, under a French doctor, with a large number of patients. The Emperor Haile Selassié maintained out of his privy purse the Bethsaida hospital which had the most modern equipment and was extremely well run by Swedish doctors. The American Presbyterian missionaries built a hospital of 160 beds in 1923. The Sudan Interior Mission, working through a Canadian surgeon, established a leprosarium at the capital in 1933, while the Seventh Day Adventists, an American mission, managed a maternity hospital founded in the name of the Empress Zawditu. A government dispensary, set up by the municipality, was under the charge of a French doctor. In the provinces a small government hospital at Jijiga, near the frontier of British Somaliland, and one or two clinics were the only contribution of the government, but here the Emperor encouraged the missionaries to fill the breach. There were American, Swedish, and French mission hospitals in the towns of Harar, Bure, Dessie, and Lekemti, and dispensaries in some of the conquered pagan and Muslim provinces of the south, such as Walamo, Sidamo, Kaffa, Jimma, and Bale; while a French mission did fine work among the lepers at Harar.

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[1] Sandford, pp. 63–4.

In 1933 the Emperor went a step further and allowed missions to be established in the Christian and Amhara countries of Bagemdir, Lasta, and Gojjam. The Emperor and the governor of Bagemdir agreed that two hospitals should be built by one of the missions at Debra Tabor, the capital of Bagemdir, one at the expense of the Emperor and the other at that of the governor, Ras Kassa. As the whole country was in great need of hospitals, the decision to build two hospitals in a town of 15,000 inhabitants seems hard to explain. Here, at first, the missionaries suffered considerably from insults and stone-throwing at the hands of the people, but eventually overcame the initial dislike and mistrust. It speaks much for the courage of the Emperor that he allowed a foreign mission to settle in a Christian and Amhara province. He and Ras Kassa went a step further in Lasta province allowing American missionaries to open a station and build a hospital on the outskirts of the holy city of Lalibala, one of the main religious centres of Ethiopia. Large numbers of priests lived in the town which boasted the ten famous monolithic churches, built in the twelfth century, and most of the population lived in the service of the church. Yet the missionaries encountered little opposition here and eventually gained the trust of the people. The Italian war interrupted their activities, and one of these missionaries, Mrs. Oglesby, was later killed by Italian aviators in the Sudan.

Efforts were made to train medical orderlies at the government hospitals and a few of these were sent into the interior with medicines. Ethiopian men and women were also trained as orderlies and nurses in the mission hospitals and proved to be good learners. Three such orderlies were employed by the British Ambulance Unit during the Italian war, and rendered invaluable and devoted service.

With regard to the vast problem of public health in the country as a whole, little had been done. Owing to the political distrust of all European intentions and investigations the tentative offer of the health department of the League of Nations to send out a medical mission of inquiry was not encouraged. Instead, a German doctor paid a short visit to the capital and presented a report in 1933. Shortly before the war, Dr. Melly, an English surgeon, arrived with proposals to build with charitable funds a large hospital and medical school. The cost of maintenance was to be borne by the Ethiopian Government. Except for the well-known Dr. Martin there were no Ethiopian doctors possessing any knowledge of modern medicine, and Dr. Melly's scheme promised to fill this gap and avoid the expense and difficulties of sending young Ethiopians to study medicine in Europe. The project was full of promise. The Italian invasion, however, cut short the negotiations, and Dr. Melly transferred his activities to the organization of a British Ambulance Unit. He was killed by Ethiopian rioters while leading a rescue party to succour Ethiopian wounded in the streets of Addis Ababa during the riots of 1936.[1]

Mrs. Sandford, who spent sixteen years in the country, bears witness to the great willingness of the people to receive help and advice in matters of health and hygiene, and she quotes Wylde from an earlier date to show how readily the Ethiopians accepted vaccination.[2] Other recent witnesses say the same and point out that this extreme confidence, which leads them to doctor and even inject themselves with European drugs, might be a danger.[3] It certainly would be so if quacks or quack advertisements were ever let loose upon their country.

THE ITALIAN OCCUPATION

The Italian invasion cut across all these small beginnings and caused, even apart from the direct injuries of war, widespread misery. The inauguration just before the war of a branch of the Red Cross and also of the Ethiopian Women's Work Association to supply bandages and medical comforts to the troops made a heroic but small contribution to the vast needs of the invaded country. The British Red Cross Unit under Dr. Melly went into the field with the troops and did courageous service. It was deliberately bombed from the air from a low level by Italian airmen.[4]

The Italians set themselves to conduct, from the point of view of their own army, a model campaign, and their experience in their own country of both malarial and mountain conditions formed a useful background for a campaign in Ethiopia. A large part was played in this sphere by Sir Aldo Castellani, the Italian malaria specialist from Harley Street. The Italians claim that the health of their army was a record in the history of war, and Quaranta states that only 599 men died from sickness, the rate of mortality being less than in the Italian army at home.[5] No less than 2,000 doctors were attached to the Italian army and there were still 800 doctors in the country in 1939.[1] Their services were very largely concentrated upon the immense numbers of Italian settlers, soldiers, and road-workers, but it would be untrue to say that no by-product of their activities reached the Ethiopians. A number of war hospitals were kept in being; dispensaries were set up at government stations and the formerly existing hospitals were maintained, though these appear mainly, if not exclusively, to have served the Italians. Italian missionaries set up leper stations at Jimma, Gondar, and Harar, and some mobile medical units went about the country distributing medicines and carrying out vaccination. Centres for making serum and vaccines were set up in the provinces.[2] A modern laboratory for scientific and diagnostic investigations was developed at the capital and with it a new hospital containing the first lift ever installed in Ethiopia. Another laboratory was established in Harar.

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[1] For Dr. Melly's letters about his medical project and a memoir see Melly, A. J., *John Melly of Ethiopia*, 1937.

[2] Sandford, pp. 64–5.

[3] McLaren, D. and I, 'The Tebasse Community Centre, Ethiopia', *Oversea Education*, vol. 26, no. 2, p. 55.

[4] Melly, *op. cit.*, pp. 217–18.

[5] Quaranta, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

These facts are drawn mainly from Italian reports and, perhaps inevitably in the circumstances, sweeping denials have been made that these medical services ever reached the people, or that they were more than a façade of propaganda. It is difficult now to unravel the exact truth, though it is probably true that in this, as in other matters, the Italian conquerors were not predominantly concerned with the interests of the Ethiopians and that only the marginal effects of their own health services reached the people. It is, indeed, impossible to excuse the ruthless way in which they destroyed the long-matured and altruistic work of the medical missions. One thing, however, is certain, that they left behind them a huge stock of medical supplies of all kinds, valued at £2,000,000, and this was of the greatest value to the British army, which took over large quantities, and to the Ethiopian people. Unfortunately, in the excitement of the early days of liberation, some of the Italian provincial hospital buildings were looted and injured by the Ethiopians while some of them were turned into stables, byres, and butcheries.[3]

THE RESTORATION

In the early days of the reconquest a certain number of Italian doctors were retained, especially as pathologists and radiologists. When the British military mission was organized its doctors did what they could to serve civilians in the area where they were stationed. A British doctor,

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

[2] *Ibid.* Also information from Dr. L. P. Mair's unpublished study.

[3] 'My biggest impression of the campaign was the systematic cunning of the chiefs in wrecking hospitals and wantonly ruining millions of pounds' worth of Italian drugs.' This view was given in a letter in *East Africa and Rhodesia*, 12 September 1946.

Colonel Maclean, was appointed director of medical services and by the middle of 1942 he had from various sources some thirty-seven doctors working under him, as compared with the 800 the Italians had employed. Some of the Italian doctors stayed on in the Ethiopian service and on the whole have done good work. The Friends' Ambulance Unit, which sent out teams of workers in 1942, provided seven doctors and also some thirty-two trained medical assistants. These were distributed mainly to provincial centres, working within the system set up under the director.

It is too soon to comment with any assurance on the plans that have been made since the restoration of the Emperor to build a sound medical and public health system. Several unexceptional measures for the regulation of public health, of medical practitioners and of pharmacy have been passed. The old hospitals have been put into working order and, with all the Italian improvements added to some of them, placed at the service of the people. The Emperor, who from his days as Regent had been behind all the advances in health services, has continued to give his authority to improvements in this sphere. His daughter, the Princess Tsahai, trained as a nurse in London during her exile and was much beloved there. After her untimely death a movement was set on foot to build a first-class hospital in her memory, and considerable sums were collected for this purpose in England as a tribute of friendship and sympathy with Ethiopia. There appears to have been some difficulty and delay about the construction of this hospital but by the middle of 1946 it was said to be approaching completion.

The diseases prevalent in Ethiopia appear to be much the same as those of any backward African territory.[1] Malaria is prevalent especially below 7,000 feet and is mostly of the malignant tertian variety. The highlanders going down to low levels suffer greatly from malaria and this has checked any continuous occupation of the surrounding lowlands by the Amhara-Tigré groups. Leprosy is common, and also louse-borne types of typhus and relapsing fever. Typhus, indeed, is endemic all the year round, with a seasonal increase in the heavy rainy season: it has a mortality rate of ten per cent in the hospitals, but this may go up to fifty per cent for cases which do not come for treatment. Trachoma is widespread and often serious; of a sample of 315 children examined at Aduwa school, forty-eight per cent were infected. Amoebic dysentery is one of the major diseases. Among skin diseases, the chief menace is the tropical ulcer which takes very serious forms. Hookworm, so great a scourge in parts of British Africa, is not so prevalent in Ethiopia; here the main intestinal parasite is the tape-worn, the presence of which is attributed to the traditional custom of eating raw meat. Ethiopians had their own very violent treatment for this in the form of a drug derived from a tree and it was a social convention that a man should be left undisturbed after he had resorted to this treatment. Venereal diseases are very widespread, syphilis and gonorrhoea being the most common, with soft sore somewhat less common. In spite of the wide incidence and long hold these diseases seem to have had in Ethiopia or, more likely, because of this, the acuter forms known in Europe are less often met. Indeed, according to some observers the disease is so endemic that it is often little more than a nasty skin disease in its symptoms. Of the sample of 135 children only ten per cent were suspected of congenital syphilis, a percentage which most observers would rate as too low to be representative. Among diseases which, in addition to hookworm, are rather surprisingly absent, cholera and plague should be named.

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[1] This rather disjointed and provisional information has been derived from various sources, some of it being obtained from workers in the Friends' Ambulance Unit. See also Manson-Bahr, C., 'The Diseases of East Africa', *The Lancet*, 14 February 1942.

It need hardly be said that preventive, rather than curative, measures are the great need of Ethiopia. In spite of the fertility of the country some of the diseases of nutrition, such as scurvy and goitre, are fairly common. The great evil is dirt; teaching in hygiene and personal cleanliness is an urgent need. Some of the officers of the military mission who have been training the Ethiopian army since the restoration found this one of their great difficulties; uncleanliness in habits, especially in the married quarters, was, however, gradually overcome by education and by the award of prizes.[1] The F.A.U. medical workers directed a great deal of effort to a campaign, almost hopeless in the time at their disposal, to clean up the filth in the towns. Almost inevitably at their first attempt they met the solid resistance of bad old customs. One of these is the Ethiopian habit of urinating and defecating in public places. In some parts, in order to pay respect to a dead wife, a widower will refrain from washing himself and his clothes for two years. Another custom, injurious rather than unclean, is that of feeding a newborn child upon butter for the first three days.[2]

It would be misleading to leave the reader with a wholly optimistic picture of the enthusiasm of the Ethiopian people and rulers for medical advances. The conditions in the provinces and the suspicions and dilatoriness of many Ethiopian authorities have, in some instances, prevented full co-operation with Europeans whose sole object was to serve them. Here the experience of the Friends' Ambulance Unit is of interest.[1] It seems that they obtained excellent co-operation from individual governors and other officials and were much impressed by the keenness and intelligence of many of the Ethiopians whom they trained as medical aids, in spite of the inadequate pay granted to these men compared with that of the most junior government clerks. But after some three years of devoted work, struggling with the massive health problems of the country in various centres, they were disheartened to find that little was done to meet their offers to prolong what was an emergency war-time effort, in order to allow for the handing over of their work to others. Little or no effort seemed to be made to continue most of the medical work they had begun.

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[1] *Sudan Herald*, 26 August 1942.

[2] McLaren, *op. cit.* p. 51.

They were chiefly disturbed by the lack of any serious attempt to recruit such qualified medical practitioners as were available, a reluctance that may have been due to the hostility and suspicion towards Europeans which influenced the action of the government. There seemed also an unreadiness to take the first steps needed to educate and train an Ethiopian staff. Schemes for the training of Ethiopian dressers, sanitary inspectors, and administrators met with little encouragement from Ethiopian officials. Moreover, great difficulties in obtaining proper provision in funds and supplies were met because the control of medical services was in the hands of the Minister of the Interior, whose decisions and interventions often appeared to be taken without any expert advice.

There were also local difficulties in the provinces. It was, perhaps, not surprising that with a proud and distrustful people like the Amhara ruling class, the appearance of a number of young Englishmen in the middle of their provinces, responsible not to them but to a British medical director at headquarters, was displeasing. The resentment would be enhanced when these strangers took it upon themselves to criticize the sanitary conditions of the towns, and to attempt to build up a medical service, handling Ethiopian funds in the process. Where the xenophobia of provincial officials was not tempered by a sense of responsibility towards the people of the province or any appreciation of their deep need for these new services, indifference might become active obstruction. It might have been hoped that with time and patience these not unnatural first reactions would have died down; unfortunately the tendency was for them to increase and to spread to places where co-operation had been excellent. Dressers would be arrested without any good reason, or given counter-orders by the governor; European staff would be suddenly banned from a prison they had been regularly visiting. It was not, perhaps, so surprising, in view of its novelty, that public health work broke down almost everywhere in the provinces, Diredawa, the railway centre, being an exception to this.

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[1] The writer has had the opportunity of discussing these questions with several members of the Unit as well as with others who have recent knowledge of Ethiopia.

This was the situation which led the F.A.U. authorities, whose character and purposes would dictate the most restrained and patient handling of such a situation, to sum up the situation in their Annual Report for 1946 in these words:

'The F.A.U. went to Ethiopia in 1942 at the invitation of the Ethiopian Government. It was to stay for a year, which was regarded as the length of time needed before the Ethiopian Government could replace the Italian medical service by one of its own. The Unit extended the period to two and a half years but found it impossible to continue work beyond 1945. The members of the Section had come to believe that nothing would be done in preparation for adequate replacement of their services so long as their continued presence seemed assured. Lack of Government interest and support for the services they were attempting to promote rendered their work increasingly sterile and multiplied the difficulties of administration.'

It must be hoped that some of this disappointment can be put down to the youthful impatience of the teams and their lack of experience both of a backward African country and also of the special difficulties besetting the Ethiopian Government in the years of the mission. But, whatever discount may be made for these reasons and whatever explanation may justifiably be offered, this report should check some of the over-optimistic claims which are so frequently made about Ethiopian conditions and prospects. The uncritical acceptance of these might lead to a disillusionment which would have more unfavourable reactions for Ethiopia than the evidence of candid friends. It is impossible not to close these references to the work of the F.A.U. without regretting that the splendid service they gave, working almost unpaid in lonely and difficult conditions, was not appreciated at its proper value by the Ethiopians.[1]

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[1] As this chapter was about to be printed the Ethiopian Government issued a statement which had been presented to the Foreign Ministers' Conference in 1946. In this, in order to show the competence of Ethiopia to govern Eritrea, very bold claims and future plans are made about the various branches of Ethiopian administration. The section upon health runs as follows:

'The Ministry of Public Health at present operates twenty hospitals with a capacity of about 2,000 beds and there are seventy-eight clinics in operation. During the eighteen months, it is planned to rehabilitate or build twentv

EDUCATION BEFORE 1935

As with health, so with education, the beginning made by Menelik and carried on by Haile Selassié had by 1935 gone little further than the capital. In this sphere, however, the Ethiopian church had provided more foundation for modern construction than had Ethiopian native medicine.

It has been claimed that, if the country's education is regarded historically, the Ethiopian church schools of 1935 represented the oldest continuous system of education in the world. The Egyptian Copts and still more the Chinese might dispute this claim, and in fact we know little of Ethiopian education in the middle ages. It is reasonably certain, however, that for centuries before the Muslim invasions of the sixteenth century, native learning, mainly of an ecclesiastical character, was maintained from centres of study in certain monasteries and churches. These traditions never died out and in 1935 most of the many hundreds of churches attempted some educational function, even if, like the Koran schools of Islam, they did little more, in return for fees of food and grain, than teach a few children to recite the Psalter and other sacred passages in Ge'ez. There might be lessons in writing and simple arithmetic for those who wished to go further. All the clergy and lay ministers, a very large class, would have had some education, however little. Rich men would often pay one of them to live in his house as tutor to the family. In these traditional education services use was still made of parchment manuscripts.[1] The higher ecclesiastical studies found their home in some of the monasteries where the Ge'ez literature, and especially the *Kebra Nagast* (Glory of the Kings) and the *Fetha Nagast* (Book of the Laws) were studied. As with the more backward Muslim

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additional hospitals and some sixty dispensaries, and to engage the services of forty additional physicians and sixty nurses.

'The Imperial Ethiopian Government possess a fully equipped and modern Research Institute, a well-stocked Medical Depot and an Anti-epidemic Service in operation. During the next few months a tropical Hospital and Research Institute will be opened at Jimma, under the direction of a Swiss Medical Team now in Ethiopia.'

It has been impossible in the time to obtain information from Ethiopia which would allow of any comment upon this statement. Those with knowledge of the great difficulties and cost of developing medical services in tropical Africa will certainly regard the statement as optimistic in tone. Its proper interpretation depends upon the exact significance of the terms used in the statement.

[1] *Handbook*, pp. 72–3.

countries, it was uncertain at the beginning of this century whether a movement of educational reform could be made to flow into this extensive but conservative system or whether entirely new channels must be made for it. The education given by the church, whether or not it was still effective for the training of boys to fill its own several orders, appeared to be out of touch with the needs and the awakening desires of the new century.

What the Ethiopian church in its conservatism and isolation could not supply was to some limited extent brought to the country by the foreign missions. Among these educational agents, though they were still regarded with considerable suspicion for historical reasons, were some Roman Catholic missionaries. The most successful in winning Ethiopian support in the field of education were the Swedish Lutherans who started schools at the capital and at Harar. One of the great difficulties was the lack of literature in the local characters and the Swedes were very active in producing books of a religious nature. The Seventh Day Adventists and American Presbyterian missions also undertook teaching. The work of the foreign missions was mainly in Addis Ababa, Harar, and southern Ethiopia. In a country which had no modern educational system, the influence exerted by these few schools, through which passed most of the first leaders educated in the European sense of the term, was quite disproportionate to the scale of their efforts.

The Ethiopian Government made its entry into the field of education in 1908 when the Emperor Menelik founded the first state school at the capital; it was staffed with Egyptian Coptic masters and contained 150 boys. These were taught English, and sports and gymnastics were encouraged. The present Emperor, when still Regent, showed his keen appreciation of the need for a new educational movement if his country was to hold its own in the modern world. He founded the Tafari Makonnen school in 1928, and this school remained very close to his heart. It held some 250 boys, 100 of them boarders, and was under a French headmaster with a staff of mixed nationalities. It was remarkable for its excellent laboratories. Later he founded a Lycée Haile Selassié under a Syrian headmaster; this was a primary and technical school. In 1931 the Empress Menen established a school for girls named after herself, in which eighty girls were trained upon French lines, mainly in domestic science. There was also a primary school attached to Saint George's Church and an orphanage for boys. Altogether it may be estimated that between 600 and 700 boys and girls received at least the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of the capital before the Italian invasion. There were government schools also at Harar, Jimma, Goré, and Dessie (where a princess had left an endowment for a school), and a few other provincial centres, but it is impossible to generalize about their enrolment or their standards.[1] Boy Scouts were started in the capital and were allotted special premises: the second son of the Emperor was appointed to be their honorary commander. They numbered some 300 in 1934 and a Greek instructor was placed in charge of them. It seems, however, that they were more a school of military cadets than a true scouting movement. These beginnings of an educational system may have been small numerically but their influence went far beyond the walls of the schools. Mrs. Sandford, as a resident in the capital between 1920 and 1935, testifies to the wide extension of literacy in this period among boys and young men in the capital city.[2]

It was part of the Emperor's policy to send some young men abroad for their education. Towards the end of the first part of his reign there were generally about forty of these abroad at one time. They went mainly to France and Belgium; some were sent to America, some to Egypt and Syria. The Foreign Minister sent one son to Oxford and the other to Cambridge. The results of such an experiment were bound, in the circumstances of Ethiopia, to be mixed. The intention was that they should receive a specialist training in agriculture, medicine, and engineering. Some gained greatly from their training and experience; but only a few had sufficient general education to enter upon advanced courses and some of them appear to have suffered from lack of money and of supervision. It seems that those who went first to Victoria College in Alexandria, where the boys were boarded and received care in their spare time, produced some of the best results.

Upon their return some of these young men felt a not unhealthy discontent with conditions in their own country. They expected to be given salaries and positions of a kind to which they believed they were entitled. While most of them found valuable employment in government departments and some in the railway and other European concerns, the positions and pay sometimes disappointed them since they found it difficult to maintain the European standard of life to which they had become accustomed. A few of them were unhappy and disheartened; most were very naturally critical of the reactionary elements in the country. They looked to the Emperor to accelerate his reforms and to make greater use of their own services, while he, for his part, was not ready to offend the older men. Just before the outbreak of the war, these younger men were planning to form a Young Ethiopian Movement, and they drew up a programme of reform. A large number of them—seventy-five per cent according to the official claim—were murdered by the Italians in the massacres in 1937 after the attempt upon Graziani's life. There seems to have been method in these murders which continued for two or three days in the capital and were extended to the provinces. As a result, very few of the 125 men who, it is estimated, had been trained abroad, survived to help the restored Ethiopia. This was a cruel loss to the Emperor and the nation. Among the survivors were a few who succeeded in escaping from the country, thus gaining a second experience of the outside world.

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[1] Zervos, A., *L'Empire d'Ethiopie*, Athens, 1936, pp. 229–31. Also Sandford, pp. 67 ff.

[2] Sandford, p. 67.

EDUCATION UNDER THE ITALIANS

In education, above all, the Italians were determined to start with a *tabula rasa* upon which they could write their own Fascist doctrine and the new loyalty to the conqueror which they demanded. They dealt with the foreign missions in the most violent and high-handed way, expelling all the Protestant teachers and breaking up even the long-established French Roman Catholic mission at Harar. This behaviour was, of course, quite at variance with the international conventions under which Italian missions had freedom to work in other parts of Africa. It is to the credit of British governments in Africa that no retaliatory measures were aimed at Italian missions in their territories.

The first care of the Italians was to appropriate or to build schools for the Italian children, but they claimed that by the middle of 1938 there were 10,598 native pupils in seventy-five schools, with a training centre for agriculture and crafts in Galla-Sidamo.[1] These figures are, of course, for the whole of Italian East Africa. An important part of their policy was to use education not only to stamp their own doctrine upon the children—Italian visitors expressed astonishment and pleasure at the speed with which the children had mastered the Fascist anthem—but also as a means of dividing the component races and undermining the superiority of the Amharas. Separate schools were set up for Amharas, Muslims, and Gallas, while the Muslims were especially favoured. Great stress was put upon the teaching of Arabic, and so-called 'higher schools' of Islamic instruction were opened at Harar and Jimma, a Muslim teacher from Libya being imported for the latter. One reason given for this was the great commercial importance of the Muslims. According to the Italian reports, use was made also of educational films and of talks broadcast in the market-places.[2]

[1] Quaranta, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–10.

[2] *Ibid.*

THE RESTORATION

At the restoration the Ethiopian Government had to rebuild the whole system of education.[1] The children in the schools in 1935 had uffered a complete break of several years in their previous course of ducation and many were too old in 1941 to begin again. There had en much dislocation of family life and many boys had prematurely ered the new labour market provided by the Italians. There was, and n 1946—still is, a great dearth of books and school equipment. On redit side, the Ethiopians were able to take over from the Italians valuable buildings for educational purposes. Time may show, , that they gained, in the educational sphere, from the very of the foreign occupation which shook conservative influences howed them the urgent need for modern learning if they were to tand a world which had broken in upon the country with such ce.

his first Minister of Education the Emperor appointed Ato nen Desta, a man who had attended an American University and lled widely and had later played a pioneer and leading part with the patriots in the war of liberation. While the Ethiopians themselves admit that no impartial reports have been available upon their educational reconstruction, the general situation can be pieced together from various sources.[2] The first necessity was to open the schools which the Italians had closed in the capital. The Tafari Makonnen school was reopened as an elementary school with 800 boys first under an American missionary, then under a British master and then again under Canadian Jesuits. The old Menelik school was renamed after the Crown Prince; it later reverted to its old name and was put in charge of a Swede. The Empress Menen school, which the Italians had used as a hospital and had usefully enlarged to the extent of seven big wards, was reopened in 1942 with the greatly increased number of

[1] There has been such a rapid development of education and also in the propaganda about educational advance that it has been impossible to keep pace in this chapter with the ever-mounting claims that have been made with regard to the number of schools and scholars. Undoubtedly by the time this chapter is printed many of its facts and figures will not correspond with the latest reports. While these, in view of the immense interest and enthusiasm about education in Ethiopia, may be numerically valid, full allowance must be made for the great obstacles, especially those of shortage of staff and equipment, to any very rapid advance in standards.

[2] 'The Ministry of Education', *Review*, March 1945, pp. 7–10. Use has also been made for this section of this review for September and October 1944. Its contents can be regarded as semi-official. This information has been checked from a number of other sources.

270 pupils, most of whom are boarders. Early in 1946 the Empre opened a large modern extension to the school. It was put first und an American, later under a British, and still later a Swedish headmistre and has a staff of twenty, most of whom are Ethiopians. It will probab be some years before this school becomes of genuinely secondar standard.

In 1943 the Emperor opened the Haile Selassié secondary school boys in very fine buildings which the Italians had constructed a miles from the capital as an agricultural research station. This sc was naturally the great hope of the future. It had two British masters in succession who were lent by the British Council; the followed by a Swede. It is surrounded by playing-fields and has to a natural bathing pool. All the usual school subjects are taug the boys are instructed in the Amharic, Ge'ez, and English languag The headmaster in 1944 said in the course of his annual report that boys had worked with tremendous zeal and enthusiasm and had sh progress even in subjects which were quite new to them. Some of the had written essays in English which were on a level with those writt by English boys in corresponding forms. He was confident that in few years' time the school would be able to supply the professions and the universities with a constant stream of excellent candidates. Althoug there were still hardly enough boys of the proper standard to fill two secondary schools, a second one, called the Orde Wingate school, t be staffed by the British Council, was planned in 1945.

To round off the picture in the capital there must be added a technical and industrial school with 250 boarders and a staff of Swedish instructors. A college for the training of teachers, staffed by the British Council, was started in 1944. A school for training boys in accountancy, business methods and office practice was set up. Finally a labour centre was opened in the capital which was intended to be not only a labour exchange, but also a means of raising the standard of skilled labour by housing the permanent exhibition of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture, and by training classes for skilled workers. There was also a centre just outside Addis Ababa conducted by a Mr. Davidson and his wife for the revival and improvement of such village crafts as weaving, spinning and pottery making, and leatherwork. The pupils were to be collected from the countryside and after three years' training, which would include literacy, they were to go back in small groups to start combined craft institutions of their own. This school is reported to have been taken over by the government—according to some accounts it was too successful—and has been turned into something resembling a factory. It is, however, easy to explain the zeal of the government in forcing on the training of skilled workers since Ethiopia to-day feels her very serious lack of this class.[1] Most of the skilled work is done by Indians, Arabs, Italians, and Greeks.

In the provinces some eight central elementary schools had been founded by the end of 1945, some of which take in boarders and are planned to form links between the village schools and the secondary school. There are also about fifty day schools in centres of population. An interesting experiment was the community centre launched in 1943 at Tebasse on the high wind-swept hills of Debra Birhan in Shoa. Here Mr. and Mrs. McLaren, who were formerly in charge of the National School in Swaziland, have carried out a remarkable experiment in village betterment. Working in a village of 500 people they have shown the villagers how to improvise a village hall; grow new kinds of vegetables; make compost pits; run a co-operative village shop, and knit the wool they spin for themselves. They have also introduced a clinic and village school. Everything is done as a community effort with the help of local social service committees. The Emperor has taken a very keen interest in the scheme which has been visited by him and by many ministers and officials from the capital.[2]

DECLARATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

In August 1944 the government issued a memorandum on educational policy which had been drawn up with the help of the first education adviser, Mr. E. R. J. Hussey.[3] This laid down a complete plan for the future which was drawn up in the full realization that lack of funds and of teachers would forbid more than a gradual fulfilment of the plan. The main principles and plans may be summarized, as nearly as possible in the original wording, as follows:

1. *Mass Education.* This, affecting all ages and both sexes, should be a primary objective. It is complementary to the maintenance of existing schools for children and the opening of new ones in the towns and other centres of population. It should aim at spreading literacy, promoting better hygiene and encouraging social life and recreation. The community centre will be used as an experiment and a training ground and will be extended through the work of teams of men and women. It is hoped that means will be found to ensure the co-operation of the interested government departments in these schools. The schools for

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[1] *New Times*, 25 May 1946.

[2] McLaren, *op. cit.*, also *Herald*, 18 February 1946.

[3] Mr. Hussey had behind him a wide experience of education in the Sudan, Uganda, and Nigeria. He held the position of adviser in Ethiopia from 1942 to the end of 1944.

industries, arts, and crafts will take their part in this mass education drive.

2. *The Education of Girls* is regarded as being at least as important as that of boys, though co-education after the most junior stage is not acceptable in Ethiopia. The Empress Menen school will develop secondary and teachers' training departments, and the proposed University College will have women's hostels from the first.

3. *Secondary Education*. The present school near Addis Ababa must be the only full secondary school in the country for the present, so as to make sure that it is of a quality comparable with that of any other country and also in order to give mass education the first claim upon funds for the next extension of educational effort. Before starting a new school, there will be a system of classes in double shifts at the Haile Selassié school.

4. *Higher Education*. For the present a certain number of students will be sent abroad, though only after they have completed their secondary education. But a site will be set apart now for a future University College which will specialize at first upon training doctors, agricultural and veterinary experts, senior schoolmasters, and engineers. As this college develops it will not be necessary to send many students abroad except for post-graduate courses.

5. *Language in the Schools*. Amharic is the official language and an attempt will be made to build up in it a large literature. It is to be taught in all schools, English being the principal foreign language. In Muslim areas Arabic will be taught and other Ethiopian languages will be used in the initial stages of education.

6. *Foreign Staff*. The Ethiopian Government is grateful for foreign help in providing teachers but every effort will be made to prepare Ethiopians to take over this work.

7. *The Church in Education*. It is hoped to help the large number of church schools to play a worthy part in education. An Ordinands College has been opened at which, in addition to theological studies, secular subjects and teaching methods are taught.[1] The help of foreign missions in education will be welcomed.

8. *Finance*. It is recognized that the resources of the country will allow of only a gradual fulfilment of this plan. 'But the Imperial Government feels that, however slow the rate of progress, it is necessary to have before it a complete picture of educational expansion.'[2]

In the main this plan speaks for itself, but a few comments may be of help. The plan certainly squares with the most recent British opinion with regard to African education. There is no perfect solution to the problem of trying to move forward at once along the whole front in an educationally backward country. The critic may, however, be inclined to pause on the always difficult and controversial question of priorities and to wonder whether, even in the ultimate interests of mass education itself, some greater expansion of secondary education, to provide the teachers or the trainers of teachers, might not shortly be needed, even though this entailed at first the risk of sending some pupils to secondary schools and training colleges outside the country.

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[1] See above, p. 132.

[2] This quotation is from the memorandum cited above

The Ethiopians have, since the issue of the programme, tried to meet the need without recourse to this method. Another secondary school for boys which can hardly yet merit the title, has, as we have seen, been set up at the capital, and there appears to be a tendency to promote elementary schools to secondary standards, at least in name, through the desire for prestige and nominal advance. This same tendency must lie behind the announcement—which the Emperor himself made, otherwise the report could hardly have been credited—that a group of Frenchmen has arrived to found 'a large university'. It seems, indeed, in view of all that has been said about the standard of education, unnecessary to comment upon this surprising report.

The emphasis upon girls' education is impressive, but its progress may be slowed up by the ban upon co-education. Experience in other African and eastern countries has shown that the eagerness for advance tends to break down this initial bias even among Muslims, and the great freedom that Ethiopian women have always enjoyed should help to hasten this result. It is very important that it should, as nothing is more hampering or socially disturbing in Africa and the Middle East than the disparity in the education of the sexes. In a list of schools and school-children for 1946, while it was claimed that 27,000 boys were in the schools, only 2,535 girls were numbered.

The decisions with regard to languages, and especially the recognition of the use of non-Amharic vernaculars, are interesting and liberal. The choice of English means the deliberate dethronement of French which, until the Italian invasion, was the dominant foreign language and is still the second tongue of the Emperor and most of the older educated men. This was partly due to the great activity of the French legation before 1935 in spreading French culture. Before leaving this question of language it is, perhaps, worth recording that the official Ethiopian broadcasts are in Amharic, Arabic, and English; the French Radio Brazzaville can be heard in Ethiopia and advertises its programmes in the English language in the newspaper, the *Ethiopian Herald*.

In reviewing education since the restoration attention has been directed to the efforts of the Ethiopian Government. But the government has allowed and, indeed, encouraged the return of foreign missions under a law which has been considered in the chapter upon the church.[1] Towards the end of 1944 it was recorded that six missionary schools were open, three Protestant and three Roman Catholic, attended by 185 boys and 75 girls.

The government and the missions have together collected staff from many parts of the world. It was reported that by the end of 1943, in all the government schools, there were 451 teachers; 410 Ethiopian, 12 Italian, 11 Egyptian, 8 British, 5 American, and some American negroes, who, it is believed, have since mostly left. By the end of 1945 the number of British teachers had been raised slightly and a considerable party of Swedish teachers had come.

Up to this point in the chapter it has been possible to follow, however incompletely, the achievements as well as the plans of the Ethiopian government. The latest news about the development of Ethiopia's educational plan has come in the form of an announcement by the government in a memorandum submitted to the Foreign Ministers' Conference in the autumn of 1946. There is not now, as this chapter is being written, the information available that would allow of any useful comment upon the claims and plans in this statement. The following summary has, however, been added to show the latest facts and figures as given by the Ethiopian authorities.

It is stated that there are 241 schools in Ethiopia, attended by 32,000 school-children. Some of the most advanced students are being sent for further teaching to England, Switzerland, Canada, and the Near East. Teachers number 1,049, of whom 916 are Ethiopian. Some of the foreign teachers are headmasters. The subjects taught include English, history, mathematics, sciences, geography, art, drawing, handicrafts, Amharic, and Ge'ez. In the higher forms French is taught as the second foreign language.

In addition to the regular schools under the Ministry of Education the State Church maintains several hundred schools at the primary level, while the foreign missions conduct several large schools. In addition to these there are five military schools giving general as well as specialized education, an aviation and a police school; a school for commerce and accounting, and a technical school giving the training preliminary to entry into an engineering school which is to be opened in 1947. The buildings for an agricultural college are complete and those of the University College almost completed. It was planned to open a medical school during 1946.

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[1] See above, p. 133.

The memorandum points out that foreigners hold the posts of adviser to the Ministry of Education, that of Co-ordinator of the Curricula, and of Inspector-General. Another foreigner, a British architect, is head of the Ministry's Department of Buildings and Grounds.

Looking to the future, the government expect that within a year 50,000 pupils will be enrolled, within two years 75,000, and within ten years, 800,000.

The only comment it is possible to make upon this plan, which it must be remembered was put forward as part of a claim that Ethiopia was ready to take over the government of the whole of Eritrea, is that it is highly ambitious when seen against the background of Ethiopia's resources and conditions.

GENERAL REVIEW

The general picture of Ethiopian education is one of a vast and urgent need of education with inadequate finances, teachers, and equipment to meet the need. The Emperor from the first anticipated the need for modern education if his people were to make a reality of their desire for sovereign independence in the twentieth-century world; his people, after their bitter but arousing experience, are now eager to follow his lead. He has shown this, in financial terms, by the increase in the financial vote for education from $952,388 in 1943–4 to $1,697,240 in 1944–5. It is claimed that this has been raised to $6,963,397 for 1945–6.[1] The Ethiopian Government have pointed out that for this year the allocation for education will be exceeded only by those for the Ministries of the Interior and of War.[2] The educational scene in the country is, indeed, mainly bright and hopeful, above all in the schools themselves, where all who have taught the children of the country testify to their enthusiasm and intelligence. The children are said to have excellent memories and though hampered in the acquisition of modern education by their ignorance of the world outside their town or village, are quick to learn new facts. Even bearded and senior men push their way into the schools, humbly but determinedly anxious, like the children, to learn English.[3]

Some clouds may, however, be discerned gathering over the scene. First there is the danger that in this important formative stage the Ethiopians, by using their usual method of turning to many nations at once, may get fragments from the experience and ideals of each without getting the fullest and best influence from any one national tradition. It is possible to understand why the Ethiopians demand that the foreign contribution must be given by individuals rather than by a group drawing mainly from one national culture. It is, however, very regrettable that, in their ever-ready fear that a foreigner may gain too much influence or keep out an Ethiopian candidate for a post, they have refused to allow a reasonable degree of continuity among the individuals employed or of confidence in them. Without these conditions no valuable influence or tradition can be built into the schools. The Ethiopians may succeed in avoiding cultural confusion, but the perpetual changes of plans, persons, and nationalities have undoubtedly produced something not far off administrative confusion in education and have discouraged many of those who were honestly trying to do good work for Ethiopia.[1]

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[1] *New Times*, 14 September 1946. [2] *Ibid.*, 5 October 1946.

[3] *Ibid.*, 25 May 1946. (Article by R. Postgate, former British teacher in Ethiopia.)

A second possible defect is that the swing over to modern studies may be too complete and sudden and that a generation of leaders and officials may be developed by such a forced growth in the scholastic hot-houses of Addis Ababa, that they will be out of touch with the religious and social traditions of the great mass of the people. This is almost certain to happen in some degree. But the degree may not be dangerous. This is, firstly, because it may not prove easy to force development at an injurious pace unless the scholars are removed almost entirely from the influences of their homes, and secondly because the church, without, it must be hoped, acting as too heavy a drag upon progress, may represent a conservative and so a stabilizing influence. It must be assumed that the Ethiopian authorities are well aware of the danger, though there is no reference to it in their declaration of policy. In a Press article, however, in the semi-official paper, the *Ethiopian Review*, we find a recognition of 'the problem of fitting the new cultures into the *mores* of the country with a view of preserving the best traditions of Ethiopia and buttressing our indigenous society accumulated over centuries'.[2]

A third possible danger that may, like the others, be just discerned is that the schools may be used too much as the instrument of a highly centralized government and one, inevitably, in a mood of extreme nationalism. This is only the educational aspect of a large question which must be asked in general terms in the concluding chapters. It is obvious that, in large measure, the schools must be used to develop young men capable of carrying out the reforms so urgently needed and of doing this in a spirit of unity and patriotism. It would be utopian to demand the cultivation at this stage of a liberal, detached, and critical spirit as the main objective of the schools. The need is for a reasonable mean, since it is all too tempting under Ethiopian conditions to turn the proper use of the schools into an abuse. A leading article of Ethiopia's weekly paper which must reflect official opinion, comments upon the re-opening of the schools in October 1945, and announces that they are in future all to open on the same day and all to follow the same 'schedule' and 'curriculum'. Nor, the writer goes on, is education, 'as we use the term here, just plain nurture. It is a process which must be related to a definite purpose.... Ethiopian education must be rooted none the less, especially at this stage, in the overriding purpose of the nation's self-development.... It will be unrealistic, however, if the system embraced is so patterned as to produce men and women divorced from allegiance to their fatherland....' He goes on to suggest a suspicion of the foreign teachers and the mission schools, 'For it seems axiomatic that a truly Ethiopian education could not be designed to produce Americans. Egyptians, Swedes, or any other of the many national outlooks. It must produce stalwart men and women with a healthy Ethiopian outlook.'[1]

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[1] It would be tedious as well as embarrassing to list all the changes that have taken place.

[2] *Review*, March 1945, p. 7.

There is a further danger in a country which is in a desperate hurry not only to achieve an advance in education, but also to claim the recognition of the world for its achievements. It may be that the slow and thorough processes required for sound learning may be sacrificed to the immediate temptation to draw up impressive plans and to call things by names they hardly merit if there is to be any international currency in educational terms.

These forebodings may prove to have been unfounded. They are suggested by knowledge of the difficulties that have faced governments in other parts of Africa, in the development of western education within fifty years of its first beginnings. Allowance must be made, however, for the special conditions of Ethiopia, with her much higher degree of indigenous culture, and the enthusiasm which a unified native govern-under a historic monarchy can stimulate. Certainly it is possible to set against these few criticisms and fears some further features of the educational scene which are wholly reassuring.

One is the foundation, in these early years of the restoration, of a national public library. In this a collection is being made of natural treasures of valuable Ethiopian parchment manuscripts. It is also planned to make an inventory of the manuscripts which are scattered amongst the churches and monasteries, an enterprise which might bring documents of priceless historical value to light. There will also be a collection of books about Ethiopia and it is hoped, when funds and circumstances permit, to extend what is at present only the beginning of a general library. The collection now consists very largely of Italian books. It was put in charge of an Ethiopian who took his doctorate in law at Athens University in 1939. In 1945, however, he was succeeded by a man whose main distinction is said to be that he won the Ethiopian ping-pong championship. Use has been made of an attractive Italian building; it contains a large reading-room, a magazine-room, a manuscript-room, rooms for administration and committees; book-stacks with steel shelves, and—significantly—a private reading-room for the Emperor. Indeed, as with most modern ideas, this one originated with the Emperor who, before the Italian invasion, began to make a collection of books and ancient manuscripts in the old palace library. It may be true that the library is as yet little used. Yet the gesture is itself important and the Emperor has rarely shown the range of his vision more strikingly than in its foundation and in some passages of the speech with which he opened it:

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[1] *Herald*, 22 October 1945.

'In this We must remember that the full measure of a library is not to be calculated simply by the numbers of those who go to read, but in the honesty and quality of good minds who use it. A good and honest mind assimilating knowledge and gaining inspiration from study may be the greatest service to the future generations who come into this building to gain more knowledge or a wider inspiration. As the Apostle Paul has pointed out to Us, it is not enough simply to read or even to mark. The criterion of honest learning is the inward digestion of what has been studied. Opinions which spring from superficial reading; the glib use of a glib word culled from the desultory turning of the pages of the book may be great danger to right progress. Let Us earnestly recommend to those who will come to use this library that they avoid this superficial knowledge. . . . In the present terrible situation in the world to-day it is perhaps with special pleasure and hope that We open this library. It is of some inspiration for the future and for Our hopes in peace to recall that what is highest in human achievement has got its interest beyond mere geographical boundaries. The world of a library is the world of knowledge. The world of knowledge of the search after truth. It is a world which is truly international.'[1]

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[1] See two articles in the *Review*; one, unsigned, in October 1944, pp. 6–7, and the other in June 1945, by S. G. Wright, pp. 13–17, which first appeared in fuller form in the *Library Association Record*, March 1945. It may be interesting to note that Mr. Wright was formerly under-secretary at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and a student of Ethiopic languages. He went to Ethiopia under the British Council in 1943 and his advice has doubtless been of assistance during the formation of the National Library.

If such ideals of scholarship and the search for truth can be kept before the Ethiopian people and pursued in the National Library, they will act as a leaven through the whole educational system

There is another very hopeful feature of Ethiopian education which should be emphasized, especially as the word feudal is so often, in loose and misleading fashion, applied to the country. This is the high degree of social equality which exists in the Ethiopian education. In the schools the sons of the peasants and even, in places, of negro slaves, may sit side by side with the sons of rases and other high officials. Among the young men formerly sent abroad a large proportion had no distinction of family but had worked their way up. What was true of class was true also of tribe and race, and many Gallas were among the educated minority and were promoted to important posts.[1] From the standpoint of the future this democracy of opportunity promises much.

A chapter upon education in Ethiopia must conclude with a final tribute to the Emperor. He has been the chief leader and designer in all reforms, but there is none into which he has put greater determination than into the building and rebuilding of the educational system. He and the Empress have constantly visited the schools and encouraged the children and their teachers. During his tours he has often collected children whom he has brought—not always without some embarrassment to them—into the schools in the capital. His personal influence is so strong that, if he must bear the responsibility for some of the possible mistakes of policy and administration which have been noted, he must also be given nearly all the credit for a very great achievement. It will therefore be suitable to finish this chapter with extracts from another speech of the Emperor, that given at the unveiling of the monument of the murdered Abuna Petros on the 23rd of July 1946. In this he revealed the spirit in which he had developed Ethiopian education.[2]

'As you all know, before Ethiopia was invaded by the enemy, We have done all that could be done to advance education in spite of all the difficulties that had to be encountered.

'The products of Our schools have been put to trial both in peace time as in time of Ethiopia's calamity. At this moment let us remember all those who have been hunted and murdered by the enemy.

'Humanity by nature is gifted to think freely, but in order that his free thought should lead him to the goal of liberty and independence his way of thinking must be shaped by process of education. It is understood that the independence of mind created by education individually will have as a result the creation of independently minded nation.

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[1] Among these, for example, is the Minister of Finance, and also the present director-general of the Ministry of Education, Ato Emmanuel Abraham, with whom the writer had the advantage of discussing educational questions while he was attached to his legation in London.

[2] *Review*, 22 July 1946. It is clear that the translation is not faultless.

'When we compare the numbers of schools functioning in Ethiopia to-day with those that existed before the occupation of the enemy, We can view with keen satisfaction the advance achieved within the past five years. We are sowing seeds on fertile soil and schools are springing up throughout the land attended by a youth of to-day who is thirsty for knowledge.

'At present there are numerous schools in function attended by thousands of youths. A large number of these youths are already showing sign that they shall some day be useful servants of Ethiopia. From amongst these will be chosen intelligent youth of worthy character to be sent abroad to complete their education. . . . Education, work, and diligence are the main foundation of our national existence. We call upon all Ethiopians to send their children to the nearest school, for, it is suicide and a crime against responsibility which God places in all parents not to educate one's own children.

'The catastrophe which was brought about by human hand during the past years can be avoided in the future by religion and hope in God which should be in the heart of the People. And this can be achieved by education which if not borne by the youth, the effort which is made for peace will be in vain.'

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE PROVINCES: GENERAL

PROVINCIAL DIVISIONS BEFORE 1935

Ethiopia has been presented hitherto from the centre and the provinces have been viewed outwards from Addis Ababa, the headquarters of the Emperor and the main scene of his reforms. To understand the difficulties that lay, and that still lie, before him in extending these reforms, it is necessary, in so far as the scanty and capriciously distributed information allows, to make some general study of provincial administration. The judicial and military aspects have already been discussed. As the conditions in the conquered provinces of the south differ in important features from those of the north, they will be treated separately, though it should be remembered that the north, as the ancient realm of the governing people, provides the dominant type of provincial administration and that the south represents a modification of this rather than an independent system.

For administrative purposes the country was divided into a large number of provinces and districts. The distinction between the two was not always clear, and their numbers and boundaries seem to have been altered frequently. The units were of uneven size and some of them appear to have followed either historical or geographical divisions or lines of tribal distribution. The great traditional northern divisions were modified by the later arrangements, but they were not obliterated to the same extent as were the old French provinces under Napoleon's administrative pattern.[1] Shoa, Gojjam, and Tigré, with its peculiar language, stood out from the rest for their size and importance, but many of the smaller units retained, like them, much of their old historical and cultural identity.

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[1] No official maps of Ethiopia before 1935 are available, and map 1 has been made by F. de Halpert. It was necessary to include this in addition to the map of the 1945 divisions, not only because of its historical interest, but also because it contains some names of historical or tribal importance which have been dropped out of the new, simplified map.

The provinces do not fall very easily into administrative categories. The deepest distinction is that which has just been mentioned between the dominant Christian provinces of the old Ethiopia and those of the south which were, in the main, conquered by the Shoan dynasty during the second half of the last century. The dividing line runs approximately along the Blue Nile and across the middle of the modern Shoa, a little to the north of the capital. The region around the capital, though it lay just south of this line, may be regarded as having, since the reign of Sahla Selassié (1813), been progressively assimilated to Amharic society. In the vast area north of the line, below the structure of imperial power and that of the dominating and shifting ruling families there lay, still largely intact, the variegated social design of the Tigré and Amhara groups, closely interwoven with that of the ancient church and sanctioned by long custom. South of this line were Muslim and pagan people, many newly conquered, some of them partially disintegrated and dispossessed by their conquest, and all subject to a far more direct rule under the Shoan Emperor and his agents than was possible in the north. In both groups of provinces there were exceptional areas such as those of the northern Gallas, but it will be more convenient to give the Gallas a chapter to themselves as part of the south. The non-Galla southern provinces must be sub-divided into three groups, the Sidamo Hamites, the negro, and those Danakil and Somali regions, where the semi-desert nature of the country and the nomadic life of the tribes frustrated effective control by the Amharas. The northern provinces are sufficiently homogeneous for us to consider them, in very general terms, as a whole. A discussion of the administration of the provinces must be preceded by an attempt to assess the numbers and distribution of the people.

The main facts of the ethnology of the region have appeared in their place in the historical introduction, but it may be useful to bring together here some of these scattered facts. We saw that a mainly Hamitic (or Cushitic) population, with negro fringes and pockets, was dominated in successive southward moving stages by those northern groups which had been mastered and stimulated by Semitic emigrants from Arabia, and how this mixed Semitic-Hamitic people had gradually spread its domination over the northern half of the present boundaries to make the Ethiopian state and nation. It has been recounted how Christianity came in the fourth century and how the great movement of Galla peoples from the east and south-east, aided by the Muslim invasions of the sixteenth century, flooded into large areas of Ethiopia.

In the nineteenth century, as will be recounted in some detail in the chapter on the southern provinces, the Ethiopians, and especially the Shoans, struck back and overran an immense area inhabited by Gallas, Somalis, non-Semiticized Hamites, and negroes in the south.

THE POPULATION

No census has ever been taken in Ethiopia and we cannot, therefore, know either the total of population within her boundaries or how to allocate the numbers to the several races, religions, and regions. All estimates are therefore nothing better than more or less informed guesses. To show the divergences in these guesses, a well-informed British consul writing in 1932 gave 5,500,000 as his figure,[1] whereas, since the liberation, a semi-official Ethiopian journal claims 12,000,000 to 13,000,000. A recent official statement by the ecclesiastical authorities claims 10,000,000 Ethiopian Christians.[2]

Special attention must be paid to the estimates of the Italians. As neighbours, adversaries and, for a short time, rulers of Ethiopia, they have had more reason and opportunity than other people to attempt such calculations.

The following estimates, obviously in very round numbers, are the official Italian figures. They cover the whole of Italian East Africa and it will therefore be necessary to consult Map 2 at the end of the book in order to see the relationship of this area with Ethiopia proper.

Province.	Population
Shoa	500,000
Eritrea	1,000,000
Amhara	1,000,000
Harar	1,600,000
Galla-Sidamo	1,600,000
Somalia	1,300,000
	7,000,000[3]

The following figures for the same area, published in the *Guida* of 1938, give the racial distribution.

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[1] Makereth, p. 5.

[2] *Herald*, 1 July 1946.

[3] *Annuario dell'Africa Orientale Italiana*, Rome, 1938–9, p. 597.

	Population
Abyssinians (including Agau and Beja)	2,400,000
Gallas	2,350,000
Somalis	1,400,000
Sidamo groups	1,400,000
Afar-Saho (of Danakil districts)	150,000
Negroes	1,000,000
Asiatics and Europeans	100,000[1]
	7,600,000

From both these sets of figures the relatively accurate figures for Eritrea of 757,000,[2] and for Italian Somaliland of 1,000,000,[3] may be deducted, leaving a total for Ethiopia proper of 5,243,000 according to the *Annuario* and 5,843,000 according to the *Guida.*

The British Military Administration in Ethiopia gave the number of 7,000,000 for the total population but did not say upon what calculations this figure was based.[4]

Zoli gives the following classifications for language and race for Ethiopia alone.

Language		Race	
Amhara	1,900,000	Abyssinian	2,100,000
Tigré	400,000	Galla	2,350,000
Oromo (Galla)	2,000,000	Somali	450,000
Somali	450,000	Sidamo	200,000
Sidamo	200,000	Afar	50,000
Afar (Danakil)	50,000	Negro	850,000
Miscellaneous	1,000,000		
	6,000,000		6,000,000[5]

One point of interest in comparing these latter is that they give an estimate—a highly speculative one—of the degree to which the Gallas have become assimilated to the Amharic culture as shown by their adoption of this language. We may note that Zoli estimates that forty different languages are spoken in Ethiopia, but most of these belong to very small groups in the south-west. His figures for the religions of the country have already been given.[1]

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[1] *Guida*, p. 400.

[2] Longrigg, *op. cit.*, Appendix C.

[3] This estimate was taken from *Whitaker.*

[4] Cmd. 6589/1945.

[5] Zoli, *op. cit.*, pp. 12–13.

A very rough regional distribution by another Italian writer is as follows:

The original Ethiopian provinces	2,500,000–2,800,000
Galla and Sidamo areas	1,500,000–2,000,000
Harar	1,000,000
Somaliland	300,000
Danakil region	50,000
The non-Amharic north-west	100,000
The south-west (negroid regions)	600,000

This gives us a total of between 6,000,000 and 7,000,000.[2] But Almagia, like other authorities, offers this estimate in very tentative terms.

Finally, we may give de Castro's estimate of racial percentages.

Ethiopians	32·6
Gallas	42·7
Sidamo and Arab-crossed people of the south-western highlands	10·1
Somalis	6·0
Negroid and Nilotic negroes	6·6
Danakil groups	2·0
	100·0[3]

Three main points arise from a study of these various estimates.

One is that the Italian figures for the total population are very much lower than those recently mentioned by Ethiopians. An application made by the writer for the official Ethiopian figure produced a negative reply. This demographic difficulty may be one, among others, which has held up the publication of a long-promised official handbook for Ethiopia.

A second interesting feature of the estimates is that the true Ethiopian stock is almost certainly in a minority and that it is most likely to strengthen its position further, at least as the first stage, by continuing the assimilation of the Gallas which has already begun.

Thirdly, the figures repeat the impression given by the Geographical Survey of the concentration of the population upon the highlands, and the numerical insignificance of the groups inhabiting the low-lying regions of the east and south-east.

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[1] See above, p. 103.

[2] Almagia, *op. cit.*, pp. 196–7.

[3] de Castro, *L'Etiopia*, p. 301.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: GENERAL

THE EMPEROR AND THE GOVERNOR

In the fifth chapter of this book some description was given of the character of the Ethiopian monarchy. This survey was made, as it were, from the throne. To complete the picture it is necessary to review the imperial power from the standpoint of the provinces.

We have seen that the Emperor, however low his authority may have fallen in fact from time to time, was always recognized in theory as absolute, the King of Kings, the supreme leader of the army, the head of the church, and the disposer of all lands and offices. It is this last facet of the kingship that must now be examined: it should give further insight into the manner in which the rulers of Ethiopia were able to rise to the high eminence reserved for them by this conservative and religious people. It was the periodic assertion of the royal power under strong rulers which prevented the rise of anything approaching the powerful hereditary lordships of medieval Europe.

It is, indeed, remarkable that this should have been so. It was the primitive economy which in medieval Europe made it difficult for a king to accumulate and control the material resources required for the upkeep of a central army and a central bureaucracy. Yet, in Ethiopia, this condition was greatly aggravated by geography and was prolonged by her political isolation right into this century. This meant that, although the Ethiopian provincial rases were never able to establish for long their position as over-mighty subjects, the Emperors upon their side were unable to consolidate, century after century, the authority of the imperial government. The two elements remained in a permanent tension; the balance swayed from one decade to another, and through the 600 years or more of which we have reliable knowledge, neither side until this century seems to have gained upon the other.

The crucial question was the appointment of the provincial governor. In theory his position was entirely dependent upon the Emperor. In all polities to which the word feudal can, in however general a sense, be applied, land tenure and land tribute were closely allied with the holding of office. It was the constant effort of the Emperors to insist both upon this connection and upon their right to grant and to withdraw both office and tenure. It is more convenient, however, so long as the complementary nature of the two is borne in mind, to deal first with the office of provincial governor and then with land-tenure and tribute.

Most European kings of the middle ages were obliged to recognize the right of great feudal nobles to the hereditary succession of large territorial lordships which were sometimes linked with high central offices and were, in practice, impossible to divide from great provincial powers. In Ethiopia, by contrast, few instances could be quoted in which provincial governors succeeded in passing on their positions and the lands which went with them for more than three or four generations. The most striking exception—one that goes far to prove the rule—was that of the ruler of Wag who, retaining in this conservative country something of the divinity which once had hedged his family, that of the original Zagwé dynasty which ousted the Solomonian line from its imperial authority, was allowed very special privileges. It is probable that with most ruling families, the laxity with regard to marital relations and legitimate succession, which, as we saw, obscured the imperial genealogy, was a deterrent to the building up of strong lineages.

The keynote is struck in one of the earliest examples, that given by Alvarez, of the great office of *Bahr-nagash*, ('king of the sea', i.e. the northern marches province near the coast). 'For in our time, which was a stay of six years', he writes, 'there were here four *Barnagais*, that is to say, when we arrived Dori was *Barnagais*; he died, and at his death the crown came to Bulla, his son, a youth of ten to twelve years of age, by order of the Prester John.[1] When they crowned him he was at once summoned to court, and while he was at the Court Prester John took away his sovereignty and gave it to a noble gentleman. . . . This man held it two years, and they took from him his lordship and made him the greatest lord of the Court . . . and the lordship of *Barnagais* was given to another lord. . . .'[2] And again, 'The Prester John deposes them and appoints them whenever he pleases, with or without cause. . . . I saw great lords turned out of their lordships, and others put into them, and I saw them together, and they appeared to be good friends. (God knows their hearts.)'[1] 'And it is so usual', wrote d'Almeyda in the next century, 'for the Emperor to chop, change, and take . . . the lands any man has and to bestow them on another, that it is never thought much of, and very often one plows, another sows, and a third reaps.'[2] Yet practice was never quite the same as theory. The Emperor's claim to make grants of land and office depending solely upon his will waxed and waned according to the changing balance of the social and political forces. Thus we find Ludolphus, while stating the general rule, remarking that there were some prefectures which the Emperor would have to bestow upon another member of the same family. He names six of these, including that of the *Bahr-nagash* and the *Wag-Shum*. Ludolphus has more to tell of the Emperor's views on this question. 'Moreover they presume that Hereditary Dignity is an obstacle to Virtue; that Men are more certainly made, than born great; and that they will prove more faithful, whom they have raised from the Dust, than such as claim their fortunes from their Ancestors.'[3]

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[1] I.e. the Emperor.

[2] Alvarez, pp. 52–3.

To trace the changing movements in this tug-of-war would require a recapitulation of the involved internal struggles, battles of kites and crows, which fill the chronicles and the political details of which are no more interesting than those of our Wars of the Roses. Only a few important phases need be picked out. From d'Almeyda and Ludolphus we must pass on to the eighteenth century, when the royal power fell very low. Ras Mikael of Tigré, who dominates Bruce's story as Satan dominates Paradise Lost, was not a man an Emperor could dismiss; on the contrary he himself dismissed, and, indeed, murdered, more than one Emperor. At this time, even the Gallas of Damot could insist upon the son of the former Galla governor succeeding to the governorship and they killed the Emperor's uncle who was sent to take over the province.[4] The kingdom of Shoa, as we saw in the historical introduction, was all but independent, and though its rulers paid lip service to the King of Kings in Gondar, none of these dared challenge the solid power and hereditary succession of this dynasty.

The Galla mayors of the palace at Gondar struggled to raise the power of the decadent Solomonian rulers. One of these attempts to curb the growth of hereditary succession to offices and lands and to make a bid for the favour of the people against their lords, is of special interest in our context. Ras Gugsa passed the following decree in 1800:

'The land belongs to God. Man has only its usufruct. He fertilizes it by his labours: he passes: it swallows him and grows green again in the sun. Who then dares to call himself the owner of something stronger than himself? Holders of fiefs: lords of Provinces, listen: there is no more hereditary suzerainty. God alone has possession always. He gives sovereign right to whom he pleases. He has given it to me. . . . I am master of the soil. . . . Noble ladies and lords, holders of fiefs, present yourselves! I give rank and investiture. . . . Labourers, labour! Merchants, continue your traffic! It is I who am your might and your strength.'[1] It is said that the immediate effect of this decree was to turn most of the lesser nobility into soldiers of fortune, but this might have happened in any case in the disorders of the early nineteenth century.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

[2] Tellez, p. 63 .

[3] Ludolphus, p. 235.

[4] Jones and Monroe, pp. 122–3.

Ras Ali, whom Plowden found in power, ruling with a puppet king, showed the monarchy at its weakest; Ras Oubié of Tigré was at least his equal and brooked no interference, though he sent in a token tribute. Even Ras Ali, in the Emperor's name, still claimed 'the right of appointing all other chiefs of provinces and officers of every kind at his will and pleasure'.[2] But many great families, his equals by birth, had their own armies, and in appointing a governor of a province he was obliged to be attentive to the claims of great families who, from hereditary influence, must be either rulers or rebels in their respective districts.[3]

After the disorders and decline of nearly a century, Theodore tried to revive the imperial authority. His methods were characteristic; they showed the vigour and genius which was so tragically ruined by his violence. 'The arduous task', wrote Plowden, 'of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task in Europe achieved only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous. . . . He has placed the soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish; thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains more proud of their birth than of their monarchy, and organizing a new nobility, a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen especially for their daring and fidelity.'[4] Even the *Wag-Shum* was not spared from seizure.

Theodore's successor, John, for all his great military ability, had at times to treat the kings of Shoa and Gojjam almost as equals. Menelik, though never so violent as Theodore, was able in his prime—but only then—to exert his authority over the provincial governors. An official report of 1906 states that he could at any moment take away the territory of the highest ras and put him in chains without giving any reasons for his action. The extent and also the limits of his power in relation to the great ruling families of the north were shown in his treatment of

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[1] Salviac, M. de, *Les Galla*, Paris, 1902, p. 37.

[2] Hotten, p. 116.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 181.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

Gojjam when its king, Takla Haimanot, died in 1901. He wished to break up this large kingdom, but he did so only partially, leaving the eastern part to the son of the dead king. He also made it a habit to keep powerful chiefs waiting about at court, a favourite method of French kings and one that Theodore had applied to him in his own youth. The *Wag-Shum* was again deprived of his ancient hereditary succession by the Empress Taitu, in favour of her own nominee; but the *Shum* was later restored. As Menelik's physical power declined, so did his control until, during his last years, the provincial governors again became largely independent. Imperial authority over the governors declined still further under the unstable Lij Yasu, and was only very gradually restored in a new form by Haile Selassié.

We have seen that even the present Emperor had to pay some attention to the hereditary position of great families in those northern regions which had a traditional jealousy of Shoa and in which opposition and rebellion were most likely to appear. In his early days as Regent the provincial governors still remained very independent. Ras Hailu, for instance, did not come near the capital for years. Provincial tribute was very low. Chiefs were allowed to rule the country with which their family had been associated until some misdeed or act of disloyalty brought deposition. Hence Haile Selassié confirmed Ras Hailu in his father's position in Gojjam, and punished his contumacy with disinheritance and imprisonment only later when he was strong enough for this action. Similarly he felt obliged to confirm Ras Seyum in his ancestral lordship of Tigré. It was the decision to grant Ras Seyum, at the expense of his cousin *Dejazmach* Haile Selassié Gugsa, the lion's share of the family lands, which threw the latter into the arms of the Italians in 1935. Ras Gugsa Wallié's position in the provinces of Lasta and Bagemdir was based upon family connections, and when he was killed during his rebellion in 1930 the substitution of Ras Kassa was appropriate because of his connection with the former rulers of Lasta through his mother. Ras Kassa's son was made governor of Bagemdir in 1942 in recognition, presumably, of the family connection.

The present Emperor himself might be given as the representative of a branch of the royal line which has held the great province of Harar since his father Ras Makonnen conquered it and was confirmed in its lordship by his cousin Menelik. The lands and governorship of this province were inherited by Makonnen's eldest son and, upon his death, went to the younger brother, Tafari. Though Lij Yasu, when he came of age, transferred this potential rival to a south-west province, Tafari had left behind him in Harar an army that was loyal to his house, and when the clash came it rallied to him and Lij Yasu lost his throne.

Harar is now ruled over by the Emperor's second son. While it is clearly difficult to deduce constitutional rules from conflicts at this level, turning our glance to a lower one we may note that in addition to the few examples of continuity, many others could be given of frequent changes of governorship, even in the north, by both Menelik[1] and Haile Selassié. These would illustrate their ability to act upon these rights in this way, at those times in their reigns when they were strong enough to do so.

It is interesting to consider more closely the exact position as to the distribution of governorships on the eve of the Italian invasion. For convenience the south, which must be discussed in somewhat more detail later, has for this purpose been included with the north. According to an authoritative Italian writer, the number of provinces was thirty-two; of these, six might be regarded as being headed by governors of local hereditary status. They were Wag, Tigré (divided between two local notables), Wallaga, the small region of Beni-Shangul under local Muslim governors, and Salale under Ras Kassa. Eastern and southern Shoa was a royal dominion; Wallo, Harar, and Ogaden were also personal fiefs of the Emperor governed by his sons. The remaining twenty-one provinces were all under the Emperor's men, governors appointed by him from among his closest relatives and supporters, including a few of the 'new' younger and more progressive officials.[2] This analysis would suggest that, by the end of the first part of his reign, Haile Selassié, as far as appointments of governors were concerned, had succeeded in controlling very directly some two-thirds of the country.

Mr. de Halpert, however, in information supplied to the writer, is critical of these categories as being too exact. He points out that in the Ethiopia of 1935 it was almost impossible to say which division was a province and which a district. Tigré, Shoa, and Gojjam, as ancient kingdoms, were really subdivided into a number of administrative districts. He would also dispute the exact significance of some of the appointments. Without discussing these points in further detail, it may at least be assumed that the provinces and districts could be roughly divided into those that were more and those that were less closely under imperial control and that the former were the more numerous and were upon the increase.

THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR

The governor then, according to theory, was appointed and dismissed by the Emperor and was his representative in the province. His exact title varied. He might rise to the height of that of *Negus*; he might be a ras. More frequently in recent years he held the next title in rank, that of *dejazmach*. He was the general of the provincial army, the judge and the administrator. He was paid no salary. He paid himself, his entourage, and his soldiers from the tribute of the province. On the pecuniary side, in addition to the tithes and other tribute, he collected the profits of justice and the tolls on the borders of his province. The tolls being collected from the merchants would be one of his few sources of cash, especially before this century.[1]

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[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 487.

[2] Zoli, 'L'Impero Italiano dell'Africa Orientale', *Bollettino della R. Societa Geografica Italiana*, series VII, vol. 1, no. 8, pp. 473–84.

It has already been said that no estimate is possible of the proportion of tribute passed on by the governors to the Emperor. It seems probable, however, that where any tribute was paid the amount varied according to the arrangements made between the Emperor and the governor and probably also, from time to time, according to the needs and the power of the Emperor and the advisability of appeasing him with tribute. It is certain that large caravans taking rich gifts of cloth, horses, mules, and gold ceased long before this century to come in to the Emperor from any of the northern provinces.[2]

The governor, especially if he were a local grandee, was a very great man. The Ethiopians, like many other peoples, love the trappings of power. It was the ambition of most men to wear fine clothes and to have at least one or two slaves or servants to run beside the stirrup. The governors naturally aimed at reproducing as far as they could the style of the Emperor's palace. They lived at the highest level they could afford, each with a court of his own and a circle of officials of his own appointment, whose titles were current only in the province. When they gave out lands and offices to their followers they tried, like the Emperor, to prevent these becoming hereditary and aimed at unsettling their holders from time to time.[3] Ethiopians tended to gravitate round the households of a great man with its hospitality, its atmosphere of movement, of security and opportunity. The governor's headquarters would be crowded with supporters, suitors, the soldiers of his personal bodyguard, priests, musicians, jesters, servants, and slaves. Upon festivals he kept open house and like his Emperor gave great feasts of raw meat and mead. A description of the lavish hospitality of the Ras of Angote given in the sixteenth century[4] reads almost word for word the same as those of the entertainments described by other travellers 400 years later.

When a governor travelled, especially upon taking up or leaving his appointment, it was a serious affair for the country upon which he lived in passing and upon which he could levy purveyance. His passage was an affair of pomp, in which important ladies had to be considered and a retinue taken, which might swell to many hundreds of soldiers and servants with all their families, slaves, and transport animals. Such journeys were veritable expeditions, not to be undertaken lightly. A journey right across the country might take several weeks, and in parts the rains made travel laborious or impossible for some five months of the year. The difficulty of communication gave the governor an independence of which he made full use. Governors of ancient divisions with a tradition of autonomy and governors from the royal family were generally allowed to rule with little interference. In this century the main provincial capitals were connected with Addis Ababa by telephone and this, with aeroplanes, which were just beginning to come into use before 1935, were the first threats to the isolation of the governors, which has since, in most parts, been so greatly diminished by the Italian roads. The Emperor had his agents who kept a watch upon governors and reported upon their doings; this kind of espionage was a highly developed system in Ethiopia. The governors on their side kept representatives in the capital. But this did nothing to overcome what several observers have remarked as the besetting sin of Ethiopian administration, the refusal to take any constructive responsibility. Governors of the old school were mainly concerned with the conservation of their own power, the collection of their tribute, and the fulfilment of their military duties. It would have been quite outside their range of thought to initiate new ideas of reform or to put down time-honoured abuses. Some of the governors spent much of their time at Addis Ababa and their deputies tended to be even more conservative in their use of authority than their masters.

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[1] Rüppel, E., *Reise in Abessinien*, Frankfurt, 1838–40, vol. 2, p. 35.

[2] See above, pp. 191–3.

[3] Hotten, pp. 145–6.

[4] Alvarez, pp. 136–7.

Although the emphasis here is upon administration, it must not be forgotten that the governor was historically and in Ethiopian eyes primarily a high military officer and his civil duties were no more than the necessary accompaniment of his command. He had—as was shown anew in 1935—to raise and lead his provincial army in war. Some description has, however, already been given of the army, and there will be no need to discuss it further in this chapter except in the next section in relation to land tenure.

THE VILLAGE CHIEF

We have seen that by 1935 it was rare for a great local landed potentate to hold the highest provincial office; in most instances this was held by the Emperor's nominees. But this was not the only link the Emperor claimed with the provinces. It was at a lower level that his official hierarchy was, in theory, in continuous contact with the regional and hereditary element. The governors' deputies and their assistants in the still smaller districts might or might not be local men, but when we come to the heads of villages or groups of villages we find that the leader and representative of the people and the lowest agent of the Emperor and his governor were united in the person of the *chiqa-shum*.

This officer was universal in Tigré, Amhara, and most of Galla country though in the latter this title was not always used. Because of his close association with the customary agrarian societies there were local variations in his status and duties. In general character and importance, even though the analogy is not exact, the *chiqa-shum* occupied something like the position of the Elizabethan justice of the peace. In his office central and local authority met. He was responsible to the governor's district chief for the proper performance by his own community of their duties and especially for their payments to the proper authorities of tithe and tax and of dues in kind and labour. He was the judge to whom, if wayside arbitration failed, the litigants would first apply. He would be present at local weddings; would preside at meetings of the village council, and would be especially concerned with all transfers or allocations of land and disputes about it. He would see that orders from the higher authorities were proclaimed by a crier in the village.

According to an Ethiopian account he is 'the officer of the district, living upon the soil as one joined to it'.[1] He is the agent of the Emperor. 'He will be an Amhara and may accuse even the Governor. If a man touches or strikes him, he (i.e. the striker) will not pay compensation, but all his goods will be confiscated.'[2] Coulbeaux defines him as 'le maire de la commune . . . tuteur, père même'. He manages the affairs of the village like his own, and his patriarchal authority is sacred. He is generally the genealogical chief of the community, and calls the village council together under a tree.[3] Certainly these village chiefs, representing continuity of tradition and the sedentary agricultural life, were the stabilizing factor in a system in which changing governors, roving armies, and a distant Emperor played the more dramatic, but often the more superficial, parts. This especially struck Plowden. 'There is in each village', he wrote, 'one hereditary officer that cannot be displaced on any pretence; and it is this institution alone that preserves some appearance of order in the absence of all written documents, amidst the whirl of revolutions and the rapid succession of dynasties and governors.'[1] An interesting confirmation of this comes from a later date: the British minister in 1939 reported that after two years of bitter experience the Italians found they could not run the country without the co-operation of the Ethiopians at the village level, and were trying to restore the village organization.

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[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 42. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 184. [3] Coulbeaux, vol. 1, pp. 35–6.

The Emperor claimed to appoint the *chiqa-shum* but we may assume that in this and in the other matters discussed in this chapter he intervened to do so when and where he had the power. The *shum* was generally too small a man to attract imperial attention and a strong governor would, without doubt, play his part in the matter. According to Krapf the *shum* was appointed by the governor at the request of the villagers and paid twenty pieces of rock salt, then valued at one dollar, for the appointment which he held only for a year.[2] The choice, whether made by Emperor or governor, was clearly limited by the character of the office; its value depended upon the local status and representative capacity of the holder. In some communities the appointment might be for a period or even for life, but it was also a widespread custom in the north for the office to rotate yearly amongst the leading men of a few families, generally those whose prestige rested upon their descent from the family which founded the group. There were, of course, a number of privileges and perquisites in the form of gifts for the *shum*. There were differences in his official rewards; in some areas he got no more than exemption from taxes. In a vivid Ethiopian comment, 'he . . . pays tribute only with his legs, running up, and down to carry the orders of the Government'.[3] In other parts, however, it appears that he retained some proportion of the taxes he collected for the government. It would be very valuable if further investigation could be made into this obscure but all-important office and into the position which, after all that has happened since 1935, it holds to-day.

[1] Hotten, p. 157.

[2] Krapf, J. L., and Isenberg, C. W., *Journals*, 1843, p. 280.

[3] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: LAND TENURE AND TRIBUTE

THE GABAR

It is impossible to go any further with this discussion of provincial administration without some understanding of the Ethiopian methods of land tenure. The three strands, administration, tribute, and tenure, were closely twisted together and with them the fourth strand of military service, which we have already endeavoured to study separately. Unfortunately the whole subject is extremely complex. A few investigations have been made especially by Italian scholars, whose work has been mainly in the old Tigré province, part of which became Eritrea, but, as there are very wide varieties even within the northern provinces, seeming inconsistencies occur between the authorities.[1] The situation was at least as intricate as in early medieval England while here there is no Domesday Book to give a clear point of departure and none of the successive unravellings of generations of scholars to help the inquirer. Any attempt at the simplification of the evidence must to some extent be a distortion.

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[1] Among the chief authorities upon this subject are:

1. P. Soleillet, *Voyages en Ethiopie*, Rouen, 1886.
2. E. de Felcourt, *L'Abyssinie*, Paris, 1911.
3. Rossini.
4. Cerulli.
5. Guèbrè Sellassié, especially Appendix xi by M. de Coppet, 'Landed Property in Shoa'.
6. A. Pollera, *Le popolazioni indigene dell'Eritrea*, Bologna, 1935.
7. de Castro, *L'Etiopia*.
8. G. P. Veroi, *Caratteri generali dell'economica dell'Impero*, Rome, 1937.
9. V. L. Grottanelli, *Missione di Studi al Lago Tana*, 2 vols., Rome, 1939.
10. J. Kalmer, 'The Return of Haile Selassié', *Contemporary Review*, vol. 159, pp. 290–4.
11. L. Meri, *Problema fondiario*, Rivista delle Colonie, Rome, 1937.

(For nos. 3, 4, and 5, see list of abbreviated references.)

In addition to these modern authors who give special consideration to land tenure, nearly all the travellers have something to say of the subject. While use has been made of these authorities, some of the information in this and the next chapter is based upon evidence collected directly from Ethiopians by F. de Halpert.

Two preliminary generalizations may help to clarify the picture.

Firstly it is important to remember that in Ethiopia, as in all economically backward countries where industry is negligible, almost all material wealth was the direct produce of the herdsman or the man who worked on the land with his plough and his hoe.

Ethiopia shared with the rest of tropical Africa a primitive peasant agriculture; the difference was that there stood upon this basis a large hierarchical structure of government. This meant that the cultivator must, as the Ethiopians themselves express it, 'carry upon his shoulders' all that very large proportion of the population which had withdrawn themselves from work on the land. This included the Emperor; all his officials, central and provincial, great and small; the vast hierarchy of the church and the large armies of soldiers. As a result of the undeveloped economy and communications of Ethiopia, the services of the agriculturalist had for the most part to be used directly by the contribution of part of the crops or cattle from his own land or by the use of his labour upon that of another. While slave labour was widely used for domestic purposes, especially in the houses of the rich, it was not in the north used very extensively in the fields, and the main support of Ethiopian state and society was not the slave but the theoretically free cultivator, the *gabar*. The elaborate systems of land tenure and of tribute with all their provincial variations represent only the different means by which his services and produce were utilized by the government and by other classes. It was not the land but the labour of the *gabars* on the land which provided the support for provincial as well as imperial administration. Hence the importance of the forms of tenure and tribute.

The word *gabar* has been used as a term of reproach against Ethiopia. At the end of these chapters on the provinces the reader will be in a better position to judge how far this charge was just, and especially how far it accumulated evil association by the forms it assumed in the conquered south. Here the position of the northern *gabar* must be defined in its simplest terms. In theory and, at its best, in practice, the status was not synonymous with slavery or even with oppression. Literally it means one who pays *gibr* or tribute. 'There is no shame in the word "gabbar"' was the general Ethiopian opinion recorded by an observant British consul.[1] As tribute was in theory based upon land not the person, it has been said that high notables and the Emperor himself might, in strict technicality, be called *gabars*, since they might hold land burdened with some *gabar* service. Moreover—again in the theory—*gabars* were not, like the serf, tied to the soil; they could leave their land and seek a new holding elsewhere.

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[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

The position can be put in another way. The Ethiopian, like the Englishman, owed dues to the central government or to its representative; firstly, he owed the Emperor tribute and tithe for his land; secondly, he owed the equivalent of local rates, and, thirdly, when he was a tenant, he owed rent. The only difference, it might be said, was that the Ethiopian paid all these dues in grain, honey, firewood, stock, or labour instead of in money. The difference was, however, fundamental. In the absence of central control or uniformity and in situations where the *gabar*, the man who provided all this tribute in kind with his own hands, happened to be in a weak position, the form of payment opened the way to all kinds of extortion.

Mrs. Sandford, who with her husband ran a farm for many years in Galla country near the capital and was therefore in a position to provide very authoritative evidence upon this subject, gives the following account of the *gabars*, presumably those in her district. They owed the governor or soldiers to whom they were allotted both produce and services: these might be one day's labour out of three, eight or ten days; the provision of timber for building the master's house and grass for its thatching; firewood and one fifth of the grain crop in addition to the Emperor's tenth. This, she concludes, might have been reasonable especially if the *gabars* could have dared to use their right of appeal. 'But in fact the abuse proved stronger than the system.' The masters exacted more than their due 'and the system was in practice as extortionate as those of old Roman days. Officer and soldier were equally rapacious, . . .' The *gabar* dared not appeal. Coming from a witness of such experience and of such devotion to Ethiopia, this evidence carries weight.[1]

The tithe of grain was owed to the Emperor by every subject unless he were exempted on account of his other services to state or church. This grain was collected on the threshing floors and stored in the governor's official granaries; it was used mainly for the sustenance of the soldiers. Since such a bulky product could hardly be carried far in Ethiopia there was very little market in cereals. Pastoral tribes were expected to pay their tithe in stock. There was also a tribute of produce or labour, or both, which was nearly always taken by the governor or his representative and there were further dues or presents to the subordinate officials which varied from province to province. There were also the heavy dues of purveyance to passing officials, soldiers and even private travellers, whose records are full of evidence of the readiness with which through the centuries this burdensome obligation was accepted. Some of these dues were not easily to be distinguished from the further requirements in kind and in labour which a tenant might owe, in addition, as rent to a private landlord.

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[1] Sandford, pp. 48–9.

THE EMPEROR AND THE LAND

From the *gabar*, who formed the basis of the system of land tenure, we return to the Emperor at its apex. The conflict as to whether provincial office was held personally and terminally at the royal will was reproduced in the closely complementary question of the usage and ownership of land and its dues by which alone office could be supported. Here, in theory as well as in practice, the Emperor was less successful in maintaining his claims. It was true that land and office generally went together, but land-holding was wider than office-holding; it was more complex and it affected more people. Moreover, while office was highly desirable, the earth, meeting all necessities, was the main object and, once acquired, was held with the utmost tenacity.

The theory maintained by the Emperors was that they owned all the land in the country and that it was therefore all held at their will. 'He takes and gives all lands at pleasure' we read in Tellez.[1] 'The King's authority is so unlimited', wrote Lobo, 'that no Man can in this country be called with Justice Proprietor of anything, nor doth any Man when he Sows his Field know that he shall Reap it.'[2] Numerous authorities follow these early observers in this view. The assumption was that no land could be private property and therefore heritable. The most authoritative challenge to this theory was to be found in the ancient *Fetha Nagast* itself: in this, private property was formally recognized.[3] Turning to the latest age we find that a clause (article 27) of the constitution of 1931 runs as follows: 'Except in cases of public utility determined by law, no-one shall be entitled to deprive an Ethiopian subject of the movable or landed property which he holds.' Between these dates stretches the long struggle of the crown to counter these rights and to retain control over the lands granted out on various terms to the several categories of subjects.

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[1] Tellez, p. 53.

[2] Lobo, J., *A Voyage to Abyssinia* (translated by Mr. Le Grand), 1735, p. 263.

[3] Guidi, p. 361. Quoted by M. de Coppet in Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 611.

According to one legend, when Menelik I returned from his visit to his father Solomon, he divided the land into three parts, one for the crown, one for the church and the other for the laity. Certainly, as regards the first part of the division, the Emperors retained vast estates as the royal domain. These tended to be most numerous in the region of the imperial headquarters and became less so towards the periphery of the country. We saw in the chapter upon public finance that the estates from which it was possible to supply the royal household with grain, honey, *tej*, etc., were known as *mad-bet*. These estates included also wide pastoral areas which carried the royal herds. There were numerous large estates scattered about the country which the Emperor had granted to members of his own family and so long as these remained closely bound to him they were, politically, as useful as his personal domain.

From his royal domains the Emperor took all the produce that could be delivered to him. With the conquest of the southern lands and the arrival of the railway he was able to grow and to sell coffee. Outside his domains, in spite of his frequent claims, the Emperor was only able to make effective claim to waste, lapsed, conquered, and confiscated lands. Sometimes individuals or groups, holding private heritable land, would ask the Emperor to take it over as royal land in order to protect themselves from the rapacity of some local lord or the claims of some other group. In Dembea the people did this because the Emperor was allotting so much of their land to the churches against their will and they felt that if it was royal land he would not be so generous with it.[1] An unsuccessful rebellion would give an excellent opportunity for him to regain some of his lost land by means of confiscation. What he resumed with one hand he was always giving away with the other into what was in fact, if not in theory, private ownership. He still retained over this, of course, his rights to taxation. This consisted, as we have seen, in the tithe, a tenth of the produce, which was generally confined to grain, and to a land-tax which varied in amount and character from time to time and from place to place. He also reserved the right to make special levies.

Within the vast terminology referring to Ethiopian land tenure there are two terms which must be defined and kept before the reader. The one is *rest*, which means hereditary ownership, and the other is *gult* which describes land in which the Emperor had granted away some or all of his rights to tribute. (There is a conflict of authorities as to whether the Emperor had ever granted away his tithe as well as his tax upon *gult* land.) Clearly either of these kinds of tenure was very desirable;

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[1] Rossini, pp. 104–5.

when combined they represented the most coveted of all tenures as well as the one most weakening to the imperial authority.

From the different kinds of grant made to the various classes, the governors, the churches, the soldiers and others, for various purposes, arose the many categories of land tenure.

THE GOVERNOR AND THE LAND

The position of the provincial governor was relatively simple. He collected the whole of the Emperor's tribute within the province (in so far as this had not already been granted away by a process which will be examined presently), and he used it for the support of his administration, which meant of himself, his deputies, judges, messengers, and above all, the soldiery. As we have seen in the chapter upon public finance, it is impossible to generalize upon the proportion of tribute which the governor sent on to his Emperor except that it varied with the distribution of power at any given time between the two of them, and in the north might range from the refusal by a distant and almost autonomous governor to send anything but perhaps a token payment to the large tributes in kind and in money which are described by observers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

It is frequently stated in the European accounts of Ethiopia that the office of governor, like all other offices, was sold by the Emperor and by this method, injurious as it was, he would be sure of at least some return. He would also have an interest in frequent changes of office; the governor's interest would consequently be in extorting all he could from his province as rapidly as possible. 'They are generally more like robbers than governors', was the conclusion of one witness.[1] 'The governors purchase their Commissions, or to speak properly their privilege of pillaging the Provinces" concludes another.[2] 'You are governor of Ras el Feel', the Emperor's secretary announced to Bruce. 'I hope you will never see it. It is a hot, unwholesome country, full of Mahometans, but its gold is as good as any Christian gold whatever.'[3]

That these exactions continued into Haile Selassié's day was shown by the measures he took in his endeavours to reform the provincial administration. These exactions would certainly be less in the northern provinces where the governor was dealing with an ancient society, that of his own people, in which all relationships and tributes were sanctified by long established custom.

The governor would parcel out the tribute he controlled amongst his many lieutenants in the districts and amongst his own and the Emperor's

[1] Tellez, p. 53. [2] Lobo, *op. cit.*, p. 263. [3] Bruce, vol. 3, p. 365.

soldiers. He would also have, like the Emperor, official estates set aside for the upkeep of his large household and it would be these he would be most anxious to retain if he lost his governorship. For these estates he could call up the labour of soldiers and *gabars.*[1] Parkyns recorded in the mid-nineteenth century that for his estates the governor could exact one day's work for clearing, one for sowing, two for cleaning, and two for harvesting, and this was still the custom in this century.[2] Instead of cultivating his estates directly by using labour in this way, the governor might lease his land to tenants who would pay him a stated proportion of the crop as rent. According to one authority in the north, governors claimed that one tenth of all privately owned land should also be cultivated for him and he would himself choose the lands. Where, as in Tigré, the governorship tended to remain for a period in the same family this was not so grave an injury to the province, but if a governor from outside were sent in the people might not dare to demand back the lands from the local family and were obliged to set aside new lands for their new governor.[3] Besides the governor's estates there would be others attached to the various offices of his assistants.

In addition to their more regular dues from the people it was customary for governors and their assistants to demand special gifts from time to time, such as a sheep from each village at Easter and at the festival of the true cross.

THE CHURCH AND THE ARMY

The Emperors were always extremely generous to the church, even if they had not gone so far as to allocate that third of the original legend which the famous cleric Takla Haimanot claimed in 1270. Every priest, monk, *debtera*, and deacon, in so far as he was excused from the work of the fields, required that land furnished with slaves or *gabars* should be set aside for his support. A vast total of land was burdened with this service. The piety of Emperors warred here with their political interests—at one moment they were moved to give, at another to resume their gifts. But it was not easy to assert the royal claim against monasteries which were undying corporations or against churches which needed permanent endowment and were, moreover, served by priests determined to pass on their lands with their offices to their sons. Moreover, the very character of the grants protected them. Their most frequent form was that of *samonanya,* lands given to support the service of the mass. The Emperors had granted much *gult* to the churches and thus gave them the power to keep all the royal tribute from it and even to administer justice and to retain its proceeds. Even where this grant had not been made as *rest-gult* it was not easy to regain control of it and the convention was that, when such land was taken back by the Emperor, an equivalent estate should be granted.[1]

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[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–91.

[2] Parkyns, M., *Life in Abyssinia*, 1853, vol. 2, p. 230. Also Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

[3] Rossini, pp. 107–8.

It should be remembered that land was not held collectively by the church but, as in England, by the individual 'parish' churches or monasteries or by the Abuna and the *Ichegé,* who between them held very large estates, and by other ecclesiastics.

Military service, regarded in this chapter from the aspect of land tenure, was a universal obligation upon land unless the land was held by the church and specially exempted. The obligation was on the land rather than on the person, so that if a woman held a piece of land which had to supply soldiers it was her duty to raise and equip them. There were many different kinds of military tenure because each type of service was attached to special pieces of land and called by different names which need not be listed here. There was, for example, land which supplied the following services—the fusilier, the artilleryman, the muleteer, the porter transporting baggage, the bearer of the red tent or the Emperor's tent poles, the makers of gunpowder, the quartermaster, the forager, and many other military needs. It was even specially laid down for each piece of land whether its soldiers should fight in the centre or the left or right wings of the army.[2]

Estates would have to give the service of soldiers in varying numbers from the single man to a thousand or more. Those who owed these large numbers were, of course, very important people, and in Shoa at least it was probable that the man liable for a thousand would be a holder of *gult* over a considerable area.[3] Parcels of land might be allotted to 'regular' soldiers to support them while on service, or given as a reward for service, generally with a continuing obligation to provide a soldier of some special type.

It will be seen that there was no uniform system for the raising or support of the soldiers, especially as these were serving different masters. Thus in one province there might be part of the Emperor's army as well as the governor's provincial army, while both the latter and his district governors would have their personal bodyguards. Though in the north the serving soldiers were generally supported out of the tithes, they might be quartered directly upon the people or given lands of their own. The soldier was generally freed from all taxes except the tithe and this might be excused where he provided his own horse and weapons.

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[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, pp. 611–13. [2] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–90.

[3] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 612; also de Castro, pp. 281 ff.

Not only was there great variety in the arrangements but they were by no means static even in the conservative north. An example of this may be given from Gojjam. Here under Ras Hailu and his father, the *Negus* Tekla Haimanot, the soldiers were simply local men who, being exempted from tithes and other dues to the government, cultivated their own land and did three months' service a year at the governor's headquarters. After Ras Hailu's rebellion and his deposition in 1932 on grounds of misrule, Ras Imru, the Emperor's kinsman, was sent in his place. Although he was said to be a much more enlightened governor, the people murmured because he brought with him his 'foreign' Shoan army which oppressed the *gabars* who had to support it. This is an example of how, in the face of the complexities of the social situation, an ostensibly reforming measure might be frustrated.

PRIVATE TENURE

The main forces by which land and tribute were held by what may be called the public elements of the national life of Ethiopia, the Emperor, the church, the governor and his assistants, and the soldiers, have been very briefly indicated. The picture, even in this outline form, would not be complete without some reference to tenure by private persons, especially by those small farmers and peasant cultivators by whose work the rest were nourished.

The position of the *gabar* has been defined in relation to the rest of the community. When, in the northern provinces, we examine this class in their own right we find that it presented the most enduring strands in the texture of Ethiopian society and that its composition leads us back to the tribal past.

Over large parts of the northern provinces, especially those that were not too seriously disturbed or overlaid by Galla invasions, the land was held by groups of peasant holders, generally under the leadership of one or more families, and any inquiries about their origin would lead almost at once to romantic personal stories that may date, or appear to date, from some centuries before. These stories would explain how that group had come to be where it was and how its forefathers had first occupied the land.

These groups held by *rest*, that is, by hereditary right. They held as a group which had preserved some of the close ties of an original kinship group even though in the course of time it had absorbed many 'foreigners', and even though, within the group ownership, there was individual and family ownership of the land.

The allocation of and the succession to the land was governed by ancient custom. This custom varied greatly because, as d'Abbadie said, 'In Ethiopia one of the despairs of the traveller, who thinks he knows the country, is to discover, sometimes by chance, that such and such a community, comprising a family, a part of a village, or district is of a different origin from the population which surrounds it.' In internal land and family matters, it would keep its own private law.[1] In some communities there were meetings at fixed intervals of three to seven years according to the region and at which the reallocation between families of the different types of land, which was in several categories according to its fertility, was arranged. Apart from these adjustments by agreement, land went from father to son. Land transactions were announced by the public crier and registered, generally by entry in a Bible or other book, in the 'parish' church. The penal code of 1930 decreed up to three years' imprisonment for failure to register transactions in hereditary land,[2] but this decree may not have been fully effective in the provinces by 1935. Transactions were always carried out before witnesses. These sometimes included young children who might be given a feast of the delicacy of fried grain in order to fix the event in their memories.

Landmatters, indeed, were settled within such land-holding groups with little intervention from higher authority so long as all its members gave what was due to the government or to the representative of the government. Their relations with this representative would be through their family and the heads of their family group and it is obvious that a community with this degree of autonomy in the vital matters of land and tribute, in addition to the minor legislative and judicial powers already described,[3] might be regarded as largely self-governing in local matters. Such *restenya*, or hereditary land-holders, were further fortified in their position by the recognition of private property in the *Fetha Nagast*. In Menelik's later days, his council confirmed this position by a decree in which it was promised that except in cases of rebellion and treason even criminals should not be dispossessed from such tenure. This provision was repeated in clause 9 of the penal code of 1930. It is probable that it was unbroken settlement by an Amhara tribal community which alone could offer effective resistance to royal and other pressure.

The Emperor would, however, seize every opportunity of breaking down the resistance of the undisturbed customary societies in favour of his own centralized control. Thus in Wallo, an ancient Galla region, the people had been organized into seven districts under the rule of seven of the original families. When Menelik first wrested its allegiance from John he had to conciliate these local leaders, but later, when he became stronger, he weakened them and had the land measured and more evenly distributed. In 1916 when the *Negus* Mikael was defeated after an attempt to rebel, Wallo was parcelled out under generals, and soldiers were put in by the central government.

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[1] d'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[2] Clause 458.

[3] See above, p. 142.

[4] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 611.

MEASUREMENT AND INHERITANCE

Before concluding this general account some answer must be given to the questions as to whether there was any survey and registration and what were the rules of inheritance?

There was, of course, no survey as the term is understood in England. There was a measurement, a *gasha*, which was the equivalent of 80 to 100 acres, and in some parts of the country and notably, as we shall see, in parts of the conquered south the land had been measured. In Ethiopian terms, 'the cord had been thrown', sometimes once and sometimes a second time, with more accuracy, after the land had been cleared and farmed. Measurement of the land gave the Emperor and his officers greater control over it and its resources and the prime mover in this process had been Menelik.

In the north, measurement has been by no means universal. In Gojjam, most stubborn and independent of provinces, and in Bagemdir there was no general measurement of land. In other northern provinces it appears that when estates were granted in recent times by the Emperor, especially those in *rest-gult* tenure, they were measured and registered. Small estates and the lands held by groups of *restenyas*, divided and at times redivided, were distinguished by natural landmarks and registered in men's minds or they might be entered into parish registers. The new land-tax of 1944 was based upon the unit of the *gasha*, but it is very doubtful whether measurement had been sufficiently carried through by this date to make it possible to execute the law upon this basis.

With regard to inheritance, we have seen that this was only held to be permissible for *rest* land though in fact it was far more widely applied. It was not permissible to leave land away from the family or the group, or equally to give or sell it, without the permission of those chiefly interested. In leaving land the owner could allocate as much as two thirds to his favourite child—and in some parts this could be a daughter—while the rest was divided equally between the other children.

THREE LOCAL EXAMPLES OF TENURE

Three local examples will illustrate tenure. The first is from Gojjam under Ras Hailu.[1] The province was divided into fourteen districts. Most of these were in turn divided into two or three sub-districts. In each of the fourteen districts was a district governor (*abagaz*), who generally bore the title of *dejazmach*, and an assistant or deputy (*Mislané*). These men, appointed solely at the governor's will, were in general charge of the administration and jurisdiction of the district. Beside them functioned the *gulta gaji*, who was always a local man whose title was hereditary in certain families. He oversaw the collection of taxes, settled small cases between the *gabars*, and acted as liaison between the government and the people. He appointed as assistants a *chiqa-shum* for each village-group, an office which was held for a year and rotated among heads of families.

The list of the tributes paid to the various officials is very indefinite as to the amount and is of value only as indicating very generally the complexity of the system rather than the exact weight of the burden carried by the peasantry or the proportions taken by the different officers. Taxes and payments were divided as follows between the various authorities.

Government	Tithe in grain.
	Tax of $2 on each pair of oxen.
	afarsata fines.[2]
	Tax of $1 on each hut.
Abagaz (district governor)	Court Fees.
	Labour dues.
	Dues for use by men and cattle of warm mineral springs.
Mislané (deputy)	*Irbo* (a proportion of the government tax paid in kind).
	A proportion of the court fees paid to the *abagaz*.
	Labour dues.
Gulta gaji (hereditary chief)	A proportion of the grain crop of his district.
Chiqa-shum (village head)	His reward was exemption from taxation during year of office.[3]

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[1] From information obtained locally by F. de Halpert.

[2] See p. 149.

[3] It may be of some slight help in interpreting the money payments to note that the penal code of 1930 equates a quarter of a dollar with one day's work of an unskilled labourer. (Clause 6.)

The taxation in Gojjam was probably lighter than elsewhere, since, as has just been explained, soldiers were paid here by means of exemption from taxation.

In a study of the system round Lake Tana, mainly in Bagemdir, an Italian writer notes how, side by side with the groups of *restenyas* tracing their hereditary occupation to the first settlements, probably in the fifteenth century, other tenures had grown up. One was that of the *farasenya*[1] to whom the Emperor had made grants of certain privileges and payments amounting generally to about a tenth of the produce of the *restenya* and also the right to exact labour for his land and house and collective gifts upon important feast days. Similar rights, but not including administrative powers, were given to *gultenyas* who, while collecting all the dues owed to the government, had to pay to it an agreed quota of oxen, mules, honey, etc. Thirdly there were the grants of *maskal mariet* (lands of the cross) to the church. In all these cases the rights were often given over the heads of the *restenyas*, who would continue to cultivate their lands as before. As there might be superimposition of new rights over old at the top, there might also be added lower stages by the leasing of land by *restenyas* and others to tenants who would have to pay rent as well as tax.

Side by side with these holders of what may be regarded as private rights would be the hierarchy of the governor. The private rights might cut like islands into the administrative area of his district governors or these might be the *gultenyas* or *farasenyas* themselves and so eliminate the dualism. The *chiqa-shum* who collected the tax would thus pay it either to the *Mislané*, the *gultenya*, the *farasenya* or the *alaqa* (head) of the church. The writer condemns the cumbrousness of this method, with its encouragement of peculation and exactions. The original tax of the people was one tenth of their crop, but the feudal organization had resulted in a multiplication of intermediaries whose great object was to pass on less than a tenth to the government and to exact more than a tenth from the people, enriching themselves on the margin of differences. Those who suffered most were some of the *gabars* who had to support both the church and the *farasenyas*.

An Italian writing of Ethiopian abuses and Italian reforms in 1937 is not likely to underrate the vices of the old system, but there is plenty of comparative evidence, as well as the laws of probability, to suggest that he has not greatly darkened his picture. He states that under the Italian Government, after the conquest, the upper part of the structure[2] had been removed, leaving the heads of villages and districts in direct contact with the Italian resident.

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[1] Literally 'horseman' and corresponding, apparently, to the early English 'knight'.

[2] Grottanelli, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 14–15, 105–12.

Our third example comes from Eritrea. No excuse is needed for this excursion beyond the present borders of Ethiopia, since the Eritrean plateau was until fifty years ago a part, and one of the oldest parts, of the Ethiopian state, and this region may again revert to its former status. In addition, however, we have the great advantage that Dr. Nadel, an anthropologist of experience and authority, has had the opportunity in this region under the British military administration to make a thorough investigation of a land tenure closely resembling that of northern Ethiopia.[1]

On the Eritrean plateau the most characteristic unit was the *enda*, a number of families which claimed to have descended from a single ancestor. This group was not static; it might decline or be dispersed, or it might thrive and reach a size when it became necessary to break up and form new *endas*. It was not an administrative unit, but in certain matters it acted as a unity through meetings of its elders. The administrative unit, the village, generally covered several *endas*, though these may have all descended from a parent *enda*. The village unit might also cut across *endas*.

Above the village administrations, in the days before the Italian conquest, came the hierarchy of the Emperor, his governors and deputy governors. These were often strangers from the south though local chiefs might be promoted to imperial positions. The imperial taxation had to be delivered to these officers, and the Emperor might arbitrarily cut out estates in *gult* for their support, or for that of monasteries or colonies of soldiers posted in these outlying regions to support the Emperor's power.

These rights may be regarded as extraneous to the underlying customary tenures which are divided by Dr. Nadel into three, ownership by the individual (which generally meant the individual family); by the kindred, or *enda*, and by the village. The first two types of ownership might, owing to the blurring of the edges between the three groups by growth or decline, shade off into each other.

In his discussion of family ownership Dr. Nadel gives us an authoritative definition of *resti*, which may cover ownership ranging from that of an individual to that of a large kinship group. This tenure was held by the people to be the most fundamental and sacred, and its characteristics were firstly its relative absoluteness; secondly its hereditary nature, and thirdly its derivation from the rights of some forefather who first took possession of the land.

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[1] Nadel, S. F., 'Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau', *Africa*, vol. 16, nos. 1 and 2, pp. 1–22, 99–109. The succeeding pages are closely based on this concise report.

Where the *resti* land was still held by a large kindred group, the individual family had a secondary or derived ownership of a piece of land adequate to meet its needs. When a son married and set up house he applied through his father to the council which allocated a plot to him within the kindred land. Thus the hereditary right was to land within that of the *enda*, not necessarily to a particular piece of land. Sons and, in certain conditions, daughters would inherit their father's rights. Before a man could give or sell his share of land he must offer it first to members of his *enda* and then to those of his village, and this restriction might apply to a subsequent sale of the land. It seems that in some parts the control of the *enda* council was even stricter and that the individual had no more than a very restricted usufruct, with frequent reallocation by lot.

The complexities of land tenure have only to be defined in these general terms to make it necessary to list numerous qualifications and apparent inconsistencies. These cannot all be given here. Mention must, however, be made of the system of village ownership, which, as a result largely of later immigration and of heavy pressure upon the land, had in some parts overlaid or ousted the *enda* ownership and the principle of *resti*. In these units (the development of which, though not begun by the Italian Government, was encouraged by it), the village council made an equal division of its lands, which were allocated by lot in three categories according to fertility, to all inhabitants of the village, whether *restenyas* or not. There was a redistribution at periods ranging from three to seven years. Village ownership appears to have been more just and flexible than that of the *enda*, though it is not clear how it dealt with improvements and permanent crops.

From the social aspect it is interesting to learn that everywhere, even where village ownership had deprived the *restenyas* of their special privileges with regard to land, their personal prestige remained. The *restenyas* were the people of superior status who, however small their holdings, could claim to belong to families which descended from the first family to hold the land. This gave them a peculiar status; it endowed them with a primacy in the local councils and even, in some parts, with certain small dues and privileges; it is from their ranks alone that the village chief, the *chiqa-shum*, was chosen.

In addition to these main forms of ownership the *restenyas* could create subsidiary forms by leasing or lending their land or, especially in the case of large and absentee landlords, by introducing a number of tenants to farm their land and pay with their services, the landlord paying the tribute for these *gabars*. (This method was also very common in Ethiopia proper.) There might also be forms of métayer contract. It need hardly be said that, after very long tenure, a tenant would try to claim that his land was *resti*, and that, with the growing shortage of land, numerous disputes resulted.

One of the main interests of Dr. Nadel's valuable analysis of Eritrean land tenure is that it shows the Ethiopian system as it was after half a century of Italian rule and as it is now under a British administration. The Italians swept away the upper parts of the structure except in so far as they allowed favoured chiefs to hold their old large estates, but at a lower level the system has been little changed. British administrators—who, of course, must act with the restraint of temporary caretakers—found their main problems arising from the intense, indeed passionate, competition for the inadequate amount of land which leads to numerous and long-drawn-out disputes. The Eritreans are proud of their land law, but to the European observer the lack of finality in their disputes and the great difficulty of obtaining any implementation of the decisions either of arbitrators or of native courts are great obstacles to the proper development of the land. But the difficulties with regard to tenure are, in all probability, much wider than legal questions and arise from the strain which the changing use of land is putting upon all customary African tenures.

Another most interesting conclusion drawn by Dr. Nadel is that the stubborn pride and conservatism of the *restenyas*, who cling to all their privileges with a fierce tenacity, represent a social evil. He speaks of the narrow exclusiveness of the system and its rigid political and economic privileges. 'It excludes large sections of the population permanently from a share in the administration of their own communities and keeps them in a state of dependence and economic insecurity. . . . To-day we are facing not merely the economic system of *resti* but a *resti* mentality.'[1] If this is true of that part of Ethiopia where both migrations and Italian policy have weakened this system, it is likely that in northern Ethiopia the problem is presented in even more rigid and difficult terms. But this, again, is only one illustration of the widespread African problem of harmonizing the existing tenurial rights of the original land-holders with the interests of the population as a whole.

[1] *Ibid.*, no. 2, p. 108.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE SOUTHERN PROVINCES: GENERAL[1]

THE SHOAN EXPANSION

The title of this chapter is used here to describe not only a purely geographical area, though, as such, apart from the northern Galla regions, it has special features and some unity, but one which has the political character of being, for the most part, a recent addition to the Ethiopian empire, the southern boundary of which ran somewhere between the southernmost loop of the Abbai and north of the present capital. While the fluctuating power and the wars of the Shoan outpost of Ethiopia make it impossible for a clear line to be drawn upon a map, it would be roughly true up to about 1880 to regard the country for about a hundred miles round the modern capital as the southernmost projection of the power of Ethiopia. East and west as well as south of this were peoples who lay outside the government of the kingdom. This is not to say that some cultural influences did not extend into the nearest of these territories, as, for example, into Kaffa, or that wars against them were not sometimes successful and tribute exacted. But it remains true that the conquest of the greater part of the vast area lying south of Addis Ababa was achieved only between fifty and sixty years ago by the Emperor Menelik, and that very large numbers of its peoples are still only slightly assimilated by their conquerors.

The conquest was carried out swiftly and it would have been even more rapid if Menelik had not been interrupted in the middle of his campaigns by the need to march north and fight the Italians. The ease with which this great extension of the empire was made after the boundaries of Shoa had been halted for many centuries is explained by the superiority over the spear and the arrow of the new firearms which the Emperor was obtaining in large quantities from France and Italy. This same superiority was carrying European power at the same speed and at the same time from the coasts into the heart of Africa. Indeed, it was the new challenge brought by European powers to Africa, and their conception of administrative control within fixed frontiers, which stimulated Menelik to carve out his own empire. Especially after his defeat of the Italians at Aduwa in 1896, he turned his victorious generals to the task, which he had begun earlier, of pushing out the Ethiopian frontiers to the south and west before European competitors could anticipate him.

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[1] Information upon the administration of the southern provinces in 1935 was supplied by F. de Halpert.

His first concern was with the Gallas, who, as a result of infiltration, since Mohammed Grañ had made breaches for them in the sixteenth century, almost surrounded Shoa. Menelik's Shoan predecessors had for two centuries been trying to stem, and later to push back, the Galla flood and, by slow degrees, had worked outwards in every direction from their mountainous centre, which the Gallas had never been able to capture. They restored and enlarged the old kingdom of Shoa. But it was not the same kingdom. It was larger, and because the Gallas were too numerous to be exterminated or expelled, they had to be incorporated. Several travellers who visited Sahla Selassié, Menelik's grandfather, in the eighteen-thirties, describe his continuous campaigning against the Gallas, and the missionary Krapf even accompanied him upon one of his expeditions.[1] When Menelik came to the throne the Galla ring round Shoa was partly broken, especially to the east, and though there was still much Galla warfare for him to undertake he was able to reach beyond them to other peoples in the south and west.

Between 1875 and 1898, as king of Shoa and later as Emperor, he steadily expanded his territories. The course of his expansion is best shown by the following chronology which may be studied with reference to Map 1 at the end of the book.

CHRONOLOGY OF CONQUEST

1875	Parts of Guragé were acquired.
1881	Ras Gobana marched against Kaffa which agreed to pay tribute. Jimma also became tributary and it is probable that other small Galla kingdoms in this area, Limmu, Gera, and Guma also submitted at this time.
1882	The first expedition was sent to Arusi.
1886	Ras Gobana conquered Wallaga of which he was made governor.

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[1] Krapf, *op. cit.*, pp. 24 ff.

Ras Dargwé finally conquered Arusi in the last of a series of annual expeditions.

1887 Harar, was taken from the Emir Abdullahi. Ilubbabor was annexed.

1889 Guragé was fully acquired. Ras Walda Giyorgis conquered Konta and Kulo.

1891 Ogaden, Bale, and Sidamo[1] were acquired.

1893 The conquest of Kambata, begun in 1890, was completed.

1894 Ras Walda Giyorgis extended his acquisitions to Gofa. Walamo was conquered but left under its native ruler until 1903 when he was replaced by an Amhara governor.

1896 The first expedition was sent to Borana.

1897 The second expedition was sent to Borana under *Fitaurari* Habta Giyorgis who built a post near the Kenya frontier at Mega. It seems that he acquired Konsa on his return march. Kaffa, having refused to pay tribute, was conquered with the help of Jimma. It was attacked from three sides in a campaign which lasted for nine months and in which large numbers of the population were killed or dispersed.

1898 Beni-Shangul was taken by Menelik from the Egyptian Sudan. Goldea and Maji submitted to Ras Walda Giyorgis. He went through and planted the Ethiopian flag on the northern shores of Lake Rudolf, anticipating the British, who arrived in September 1898, by six months.[2] *Dejazmach* Tasamma marched from Goré and subdued the Massonge, Gimirra, and neighbouring tribes.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF ADMINISTRATION

As a result of this new process of rapid conquest and complete mastery, these acquisitions were ruled by Menelik and his Shoan generals upon different lines from those followed in the ancient Amhara groups in the north, and though their own customs were even more various than those of the Amharas they do not present, under the erasing hand of conquest, the same complex administrative picture. They were treated as the personal appanage of the dynasty. The land was regarded in most parts as confiscated to the crown, a varying proportion being allotted to the conquered chiefs and people, and the rest used to reward or maintain Amhara, and especially Shoan, soldiers, officials, and notables. In some parts, to facilitate distribution, the land was measured out with ropes into *gashas*, areas of between 80 and 100 acres. By the end of these wars Menelik had collected a very numerous army and, to provide for these men and to hold down the conquered territories, large garrisons were distributed. The conquered people were allotted as *gabars* to the soldiers in numbers according to the latter's rank, as follows:

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[1] Sidamo here refers to the pre-1935 province of that name. See Map 1.

[2] It was at this time that *Fitaurari* Hailé with some Europeans pushed on to the White Nile and planted the Ethiopian and French flags sixty miles south of Fashoda, missing Marchand who arrived seventeen days later after the expedition had left. See Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 472, n. 1, and Michel, C. *Vers Fachoda*, Paris, 1900.

Governors:	Varying numbers often running into three figures.
District Commanders:	From 30 to 80 each.
Officers:	From 7 to 10 each.
Soldiers:	From 2 to 5 each.

It will easily be imagined that Amhara soldiers in charge of conquered tribes, which were mostly pagan or negro, or both, and far from such supervision and restraints as existed nearer the centre, were not likely to treat their *gabars* with much forbearance. The principle that tribute rested on the land rather than on the *gabar* was easily forgotten, and in these wide depopulated regions it was more important to be allotted so many *gabars* than so much land. Examples will be given later, but generally speaking, especially in the negro and Sidamo provinces, the position of the *gabar* became hardly distinguishable from slavery. Indeed, a British visitor to these negro provinces in the middle thirties, though friendly to Ethiopia, said it was far worse.[1] Meanwhile the slave-trade itself, as we have already seen, was a constant drain upon the subject people. It is thus mainly the status of *gabar* as extended to the conquered provinces which gave the word its peculiarly evil significance outside Ethiopia. Mrs. Sandford admits that the *gabar* status 'was responsible for much of the misery of the distant provinces where appeal was impossible and resistance useless'.[2]

The service owed by the *gabar* in conquered territory was generally more onerous than in the north. The tenure known as *siso tamaj* or 'one yoked to a third' described the practice by which a *gabar* was obliged to work one day in three for the government or the person to whom this due had been transferred. It was common, also, for a soldier to be given the labour of their *gabars* or of some proportion of them for life, so that if ever he were transferred to another province he could still claim the value of their labour. When a new region was conquered by Menelik and set aside for colonization by soldiers it was measured into *gashas*; one third was set aside for the local people, generally Gallas, and the remaining two thirds divided between the soldiers and the church.[1]

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[1] Garratt, G. T., 'Abyssinia', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, vol. 36, no. 142, pp. 36–49.

[2] Sandford, p. 49.

As a result of the rapid and personal nature of the conquests by their dynasty, there was little limit upon the authority of Menelik and his successors in these territories except that presented by their difficult communications and the paucity of their money revenues. The Emperor could appoint his own favourites and relations as governors with greater ease than in the north and could transfer them frequently. He could carve out large estates for the benefit of his old soldiers and supporters. These imperial garrisons were not subject to the governor of the province but were responsible to a special officer, himself answerable directly to the Emperor.

The eastern area taken up by Harar, Chercher, and Bale, as well as the northern Galla province of Wallo, was mostly retained to provide principalities for the Shoan royal house. From these regions revenue in kind could reach the palace.

The position of these conquered peoples, however, was too varied to allow of further generalization. Their conditions and the administrative problem they present for the future will best be understood if they are considered more fully under the headings, into which they naturally fall, of Galla, Sidamo, negro, Somali, and Danakil. The material available about the administration of these regions is so deficient and scattered that, for most part, it will be possible to do little more than give some account of the character of the regions and peoples, leaving it to the reader, with his knowledge of the administrative capacities, and objectives of the Ethiopian Government as they were before the Italian invasion, to assess the general situation and its problems.

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[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 614.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE SOUTHERN PROVINCES: GALLA PROVINCES

THE GALLAS IN GENERAL

Politically and culturally Ethiopia is dominated by the Amhara-Tigré groups. Numerically, if, indeed, the estimate that has already been quoted[1] that they number forty-two per cent as against the thirty-two per cent of the ruling people is even approximately correct, the Gallas take the first place. An understanding of their position within the Ethiopian empire is thus essential. The main events in the relationship between the two peoples have been stated in the historical introduction; we must now look a little more carefully into the character and distribution of the Gallas in the Ethiopia of 1935.

Politically the Gallas fall into two main groups; those which as a result of long contact, through migration and warfare, penetrated deeply into the centre of the old Ethiopia or imposed themselves upon it as an eastern fringe, and those covering a huge block of territory west and south of Addis Ababa which, at a much later date, was conquered by the Shoan kings, and especially by Menelik. The political difference between these groups is that most of the northerners—there are important exceptions—have tended to become very much assimilated to the Ethiopians, while those in the south, and especially in the far south, are far less deeply affected. The process of assimilation is, however, in progressively active operation. Travellers to central Shoa—and it must be remembered that the capital is in country that was overrun by the Gallas—as late as 1900 could easily distinguish the Gallas by the rude and poverty-stricken look of the people and their houses and by the treatment accorded to them.[2] Thirty-five years later, according to Mrs.

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[1] See above, pp. 265–6.

[2] Wylde, p. 404.

Sandford, who lived upon a farm in this region, it was said to be difficult for a European to distinguish Galla from Amhara, and there was no discrimination against them.[1]

The language map, inset on Map 1, approximate though it is, indicates the large proportion of Ethiopia covered by this people. They will be considered below in four groups, the northern, south-western, south-eastern, and southern. They belong to the same racial group of the northern Hamites, which provides the basic stock of the Amhara-Tigré people, and there is a close physical similarity between the two peoples, though the Gallas seem to be distinguished on the whole by a darker skin and a sturdier-looking physique. The further away they live from the central block of the country, the more easily they are to be distinguished by the poor and primitive conditions of their lives and by their scanty clothing.[2]

The cultural differences, where these have not been bridged by long contact, are, however, very sharp. The Gallas when they began to penetrate Ethiopia had felt neither of the two influences which had shaped the Amharic culture, the Semitic domination and the Christian religion, and they had no contacts with Europe. They threw themselves upon Ethiopia, century after century, in small pagan clans and even when they were well established in the highlands and could, with greater unity, have seized the whole country, they continued frequently to fight each other either directly or as auxiliaries of the Amharas. It is the more strange, considering their disunity and wide dispersion, that the Gallas show so much uniformity of both language and custom. Considering the prolonged warfare they caused the Amharas and their large infiltration, the ruling people have suffered less than might have been expected.

Certainly the rest of Ethiopia owes Shoa a great debt for first stemming and then throwing back this persistent and prolonged migration that might have overrun the ancient civilization of the north. Nor was this all. It was the Shoans who, by incorporating raw Gallas on a large scale, demonstrated how they could be built into the Ethiopian structure to become in time—a promise still only partly fulfilled—a source of strength rather than of weakness. There was no altruistic purpose behind these services. It has even been argued that the Shoan rulers deliberately allowed sufficient Galla penetration to form a division between their kingdom and the Ethiopian regions to the north which were the base of the imperial power. By an extension of this kind of reasoning it has been held by some that the Gallas made a useful, and not too dangerous, buffer between Ethiopia and the Muslim rulers of the coast, backed as they sometimes were from Arabia, and so, perhaps, saved her from being completely overrun by organized Muslim invaders. It is, however, difficult to believe that, had the Muslims ever been strong enough to repeat Grañ's enterprise, they would not easily have cut through the intervening Gallas or recruited them as auxiliaries.

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[1] Sandford, p. 9.

[2] Rey, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–2.

The status of the Gallas and their relations with their conquerors present as difficult a subject for generalization as the dealings of the English with their Celtic enemies and later fellow-subjects. To-day, or rather in the yesterday which we are considering in this chapter, the position still varied from province to province. Thus the Gallas did not everywhere have the inferior status of the conquered. In the earlier stages of war against each of the surrounding groups of Gallas, the Amhara kings would, as we saw in the historical chapters, regard them as heathens and enemies fit only for massacre or enslavement. Soon they would feel the need of using them as subjects or even as soldiers, often against the next Galla tribe; for the Gallas, to their great weakness, were always ready to fight against each other and Gallas such as *Fitaurari* Habta Giyorgis, finding no racial barrier to their advancement, fought vigorously against their own people. Galla cavalry was especially valuable for civil or for foreign wars. Menelik, once the conquests were well established and massacre and enslavement had cowed the Gallas, encouraged the process of assimilation. De Salviac, the Capuchin missionary who knew and loved the Gallas, although he 'had to watch the horrors of Menelik's conquest when the relatively unarmed tribesmen were mown down by the Emperor's riflemen', and although he sympathized with the Gallas and quoted their cry that they had been degraded from leopards to partridges, yet he felt bound to admit that the conquest did reduce the warring clans to some sort of order.[1] In 1911 Montandon remarked that the Gallas, though their position as *gabars* was less favourable than that of the Amharas, were no longer regarded as slaves. On the contrary, the way to advancement, even to the highest posts, was open.

The Gallas, who call themselves Oromo, were a pastoral and semi-nomadic people in the hot lowlands from which they have come. In the hill country, however, they show great powers of adjustment and, helped by the higher fertility of the uplands they have overrun, they have become very good agriculturalists. Indeed, the varieties in their way of living at different heights bring out the physical contrasts of Ethiopia as well as their own adjustments to it.

Galla society can be reconstructed from those groups which fell under European observation before their institutions were greatly modified by contact. The Tigreans and Amharas regarded the Gallas as uncouth and primitive. They had customs which roused their ridicule, such as that of festooning their persons with the guts of slaughtered cattle, a custom which Lobo had noted,[1] and which allowed Bruce to tell an uproariously funny story of the Ethiopians ridiculing a visiting Galla chief.[2] The Ethiopians proper, moreover, when they learned to be ashamed of it, blamed the Gallas for introducing the custom for which the Ethiopians became notorious, of collecting the foreskins of the dead and wounded who fell in battle. But the relationship varied with the changing contexts of the century and the region. If there was oppression, there was also alliance; if there was contempt there was also the mixture of blood. Galla female slaves, regarded as beautiful and fertile, were valued, but there was also intermarriage even at the highest levels, and in favourable circumstances assimilation could proceed rapidly. A Galla dynasty could come to rule Ethiopia. Yet, as Salt and Plowden show, even alongside assimilation, there could be continuing warfare, and this even in the north and in the nineteenth century.

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[1] de Salviac, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

The Gallas were grouped into many small tribes or clans. Krapf and Isenberg, who obtained information about them around Shoa in the eighteen-thirties, counted more than fifty tribes.[3] The majority of these were pagan and they were ruled according to a highly democratic system of age-grades. Indeed, their political organization was the extreme opposite to that of the monarchical and hierarchical Amharas. Each tribe was divided into groups, generally ten in number, called *gadas*, which in turn were divided into two half-cycles of five *gadas* each. Each male belonged to the cycle of which his grandfather and not his father was a member. All members of *gadas* passed together through stages, each lasting in most tribes for a fixed period of eight years (the Galla number for recording time and age), rising in the penultimate *gada* to the ruling position and declining in the last into retirement. The members of the ruling *gadas* elected their leader, the *Aba Bochu*—father of the sceptre—and he proclaimed the law which he had learned from the outgoing *gada*. Each *gada*, when it resigned power, communicated the principles of its government to the incoming group on a moonless night. In regions such as Enarea and Jimma, where the institution of monarchy was taken over from the Hamitic kingdom which had been overrun, this office became no more than an honourable hereditary title. The war leader, the *Aba Dula*, was chosen for each expedition, and several tribes might choose one such leader to be in supreme command over the others.[1] They were served by priests and magicians and worshipped, in their pagan state, a spirit known as Wak. Krapf learned their language and thought so highly of their potential future that he compared their destined greatness in Africa with that of the German nation in Europe and wished to devote his life to them. He heard them praying, 'O Wak, give us children, tobacco, corn, cows, oxen, and sheep. Preserve us from sickness, and help us to slay our enemies who make war upon us, the Sidama (Christians) and the Islama (Mohammedans). O Wak, take us to thee, lead us into the garden, lead us not to Setani, and not into the fire.'[2]

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[1] Lobo, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

[2] Bruce, vol. 3, pp. 99–101.

[3] Krapf and Isenberg, *The Elements of the Galla Language*, 1840, pp. iv and v.

The Gallas most observed by Europeans, however, especially those of Shoa, have been converted or at least influenced by Islam or Christianity, and, according to Cerulli, the former has had an even more disintegrating effect upon their political organization than has Christianity.[3] Islam, it is believed, has come to them in two ways; first from the east coast and, later, to the western Gallas, along the caravan route from the Sudan; no later in the case of Jimma and the small neighbouring kingdoms than about the middle of the nineteenth century.[4] In these parts still another influence, that of the ancient pagan Sidamo kingship, had already played upon the Gallas as they conquered or became neighbours to those kingdoms. Thus the monarchic form, the Muslim religion and, still later, the rule of the Amharas have been imposed upon the old tribal *gada* system. This still persists in changed and weakened form, and even the Muslim tribes of Jimma are said to send representatives to the old pagan ancestral shrine in Bale. Long and close association with the Amharas has in some places, as in the neighbourhood of Addis Ababa, and to a lesser extent in Wallaga and Wallo, led to the adoption of Christianity. Even Christian Gallas, however, are known to cling to some elements, at least, of the *gada* system. According to one estimate, ten per cent of the Gallas are Christian, forty per cent Muslim, and the rest pagan.[5]

THE NORTHERN GALLAS

Considerable numbers of Gallas must at the height of their attacks have penetrated into the heart of the northern provinces while, during the long reign of the Galla rulers at Gondar, a large peaceful penetration took place. These Gallas have been absorbed, but on the eastern escarpment of the northern plateau some of the Gallas who have been in long and close contact with the Amharas have resisted absorption and have therefore been the source of grave weakness to the Amharas. According to Steer the more northerly Ethiopian provinces never learned the Shoan art of taming Gallas.[1] These Gallas lived in the highlands of Wallo and Yeju, and still further north; on the lower edge of the escarpment east of Lake Ashangi lived the Azebu and Raia Gallas, who seized any chance of returning to their marauding ways and attacking the routes which pass close to them. The Gallas of Wajerat had intermarried with their Danakil neighbours and this had reinforced their marauding disposition. The Yeju Gallas, north of Shoa, provided the Galla dynasty which ruled Ethiopia in the name of the puppet kings at Gondar in the eighteenth century. These, after long favouring their own people, were at last overthrown by Theodore who appealed to the latent anti-Galla sentiment of the Amharas. Though he married the daughter of Ras Ali, whom he called 'the renegade Galla', he showed a fierce hostility towards the Galla people, and large numbers were mutilated and thrown over the towering natural fortress of Magdala, which he made his headquarters in order to master the Gallas. As a result, these Gallas did everything to help the British invaders, who had great difficulty in saving Theodore's garrison from their vengeance. Theodore's successor, the Emperor John, using atrociously cruel methods, forcibly converted to Christianity the Wallo Gallas, who, like the Yeju, had been Muslims since the sixteenth century. He had but limited success, since large numbers, it seems, are still more or less openly Muslim, even though they have adopted the Amharic language and are superficially indistinguishable from Amharas.

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[1] See Cerulli, E., *Etiopia Occidentale*, Rome, 1932, vol. 1, pp. 31 ff., and Rossini, *Etiopia, e genti d'Etiopia*, Florence, 1937, pp. 334–5.

[2] Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

[3] Cerulli, vol. 1, p. 32.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 190–1.

[5] *Handbook*, p. 54.

Menelik found it politic to placate these warlike Yeju and Wallo Gallas during his rivalry with the Emperor John, and they enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy. He married his daughter Shoaragad to the Wallo Galla chief, Ras Mikael, and Lij Yasu was the issue of the union. Mikael had ostensibly become a Christian, but both he and his son leant increasingly to Islam and found their support especially in Wallo, where the Ras could raise a Galla army of 80,000 men. Upon his defeat, Lij Yasu fled to this province. His father, Ras Mikael, and his Galla army were defeated by the present Emperor in 1916 and this province was then brought under more direct central control. But this was not the end of trouble from these Gallas. In the autumn of 1929 there was a serious rising of the Azebu Gallas, which merged into the rebellion of Ras Gugsa Wallié, and was only put down by Ras Mulugeta, assisted by some aeroplanes, by the end of March 1930.

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[1] Steer, *Caesar in Abyssinia*, p. 199.

The Emperor sent his eldest son, who through his mother, as granddaughter of Mikael, had Wallo Galla blood in his veins, to rule this province, but this gesture, similar to that made to Wales by Edward I, was not wholly successful. This was because the administration of the province after this was not such as to evoke much contentment or loyalty. It was not expected to produce much revenue, but this was because it was regarded as an area for the maintenance of a strong army. A hard time set in for the *gabars*, who had to support the soldiers. In some parts of the province they had to give up three-quarters of their crop. A major (*kenyazmach*) might be allotted 150 *gabars* for his use. Each of these had to produce a tax of honey, $3 a year for feast day celebrations, a bar of salt for each hut, two sacks of corn, and to pay in cash for relief from labour on his master's land. It is certain that the Wallo peasants were hardly used and from time to time they would send a delegation to the capital to cry out their complaints by the palace or to waylay the Emperor in the streets. Hour after hour their monotonous cries of complaint would be heard.[1]

Many of the northern Gallas were easily corrupted by Italy, being bought over through the agency of the treacherous 'Ras' Haile Selassié Gugsa. Ras Mulugeta had to use the most ferocious methods to force through mobilization in Wallo, and his march further north to meet the Italians near Makale was like an expedition through hostile country. Some of the Gallas refused to fight for the Crown Prince, others actually attacked the Ethiopians, molested the Red Cross, killed Ras Mulugeta's son and many of his troops and cut off the Ras himself near Amba Alage. The Azebu Gallas even fired upon the retreating Emperor, who dared not go back through Azebu and Raia country.[2]

To turn from these northern Gallas to those of Jimma is to illustrate the variations in the status held by this people in Ethiopia.

THE SOUTH-WESTERN GALLAS[3]

We have seen that when the Gallas overran the old Hamitic kingdoms they adopted much of the organization they found there, including the kingship, but the *gada* system in modified form still struggled to survive against Muslim and monarchic influences. The young Muslim king of Jimma, the *Aba Jifar*, had the wisdom to bow to Menelik's power and agreed in 1884 to pay him tribute. He helped him in 1896–7 in the conquest of Jimma's ancient enemy, Kaffa, and as a result obtained from Menelik the recognition of his autonomy, subject to the acceptance of the Emperor's suzerainty and the payment of an annual tribute which was commonly said to be $200,000. It appears that it was part of the agreement that no churches should be built in Jimma, a vigorous but not fanatical centre of Islam, and no grants of land could be made there by the Emperor.

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[1] Information supplied by F. de Halpert.

[2] Steer, *Caesar in Abyssinia*, pp. 165–6, 200, 265, 326.

[3] In the rest of this chapter, where reference is not made to other authorities, information upon Galla provinces in the years just preceding the Italian conquest is derived mainly from F. de Halpert, who was in these regions in 1934.

Travellers through Jimma generally remarked on its prosperity with admiration. They credited this not only to its fertility but much more to the progressive economic policy of the *Aba Jifar*, who encouraged colonists and merchants from all parts and who, collecting his dues only at the borders, excluded the internal tolls and market dues which clogged trade elsewhere. Jimma was, indeed, renowned for its superiority over the Amhara provinces in handicrafts, agriculture, and the efficiency of its government. Jimma manufactures were especially famous in a country where the ruling race considered craftsmanship degrading. Montandon, the Swiss traveller who visited Jimma in 1910, remarked the good roads, lined with trees, and the foreign firms established at the great market at Hirmata. To this market 30,000 people were said to come on Thursdays, and here was collected for sale coffee, beeswax, skins, hides, beautifully made baskets, and tobacco.[1] Informed that Jimma was called the orchard of Ethiopia, Montandon exclaimed, 'Orchard for the Abyssinians, one supposes, who have known only how to deforest and neglect their patrimony, and who are astonished at the industry of the Galla and the abundance of their land'.[2] Already at this date the *Aba Jifar*, for whose position there was no exact title or precedent in Ethiopia, was finding it difficult to buy the favours of those who were taking power as it fell from the hands of Menelik. Montandon was told that the people, who in former days paid taxation to the value of only a quarter of a dollar, now paid to the tune of $5.

The *Aba Jifar* retained considerable powers under his Ethiopian overlord. His kingdom was divided into districts (*koro*), each under a magistrate (*aba koro*). These were directly responsible to the king who had broken up the *gada* system as a political authority by making himself the chief magistrate, the collector of revenues, the patron of strangers, and of servile castes. The Gallas probably overran most of the old Sidamo kingdoms some time subsequent to the sixteenth century and took over from them monarchical forms resembling those of Kaffa, which will shortly be described. Public works, mainly those on roads and bridges, were carried out by forced labour. Jimma was spared the oppression of Amhara soldiery by an arrangement by which the king paid all the soldiers, who had no rights to food and lodging from the peasants. The *Aba Jifar*, having collected all the revenue, sent 87,000 Maria Theresa dollars to the Emperor, with another 15,000 towards the military expense of the empire.[1]

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[1] See also Cheesman, *op. cit.*, p. 61, and Darley, H., *Slaves and Ivory*, 1926, p. 196.

[1] Montandon, G., *Au pays Ghimirra, 1909–1911*, Paris, 1913.

Jimma, as a Muslim trading centre well placed on the route to the oppressed negro countries farther west, was a natural clearing house for the slave-trade, of which the *Aba Jifar* was reputed to be the main patron. It was Jimma's notoriety in this direction, as well as the death of the Sultan, whose efficiency had been declining with old age, which gave Haile Selassié justifiable occasion in 1933 to extend his control over this Galla state and to place it under Amhara rule with an Amhara garrison. The period between 1933 and the Italian invasion was hardly long enough to judge the effects of direct Amhara rule upon Jimma. But the first results, as observed by de Halpert, were not very hopeful. An uneducated governor of the old school, distinguished for his loyalty to the Emperor rather than for his merit, was sent to take over. He brought with him large numbers of Amhara soldiers, officials, and police, who made it quite clear that they regarded the Jimma people as a conquered race and set about enriching themselves. The prosperity of the market was at once affected as new tolls and levies were exacted from traders.

On the other side the Emperor could claim that it was now possible to set up a slavery court in Jimma and check the slave-trade, and to build Christian churches. There was even a new town-plan drawn up for the improvement of the city. But the local people, and especially the traders, were full of foreboding and began to look forward with fear and to look back to the rule of the *Aba Jifar* as if it had been a golden age.

Little need be said of the small Galla states adjoining Jimma which were conquered by Menelik about 1881, Gera, Goma, Guma, and Limmu (the former small border state of Enarea). These had not the semi-autonomous status of Jimma. They were important coffee-growing regions, and Guma was retained under a progressive Galla governor from another part of this country, as the personal fief of the Emperor for the upkeep of the palace at Addis Ababa. It was noticeably less prosperous than its neighbour, Jimma, since taxation, which included one third of the coffee crop, was heavy. Gera was farmed out to a cousin of the Emperor, who lived at the capital and ruled it through an agent.

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[1] Cerulli, vol. 1, chapters 6 to 9.

Its bamboo jungles made it a valuable extension of the secret slave-routes through Kaffa. Limmu used to be famous for its coffee, but this crop, according to Cerulli, who visited the country in 1927–8, deteriorated rapidly after the land was granted to Shoan nobles who set the people to forced labour collecting the berries.[1]

Taking Limmu as an example of other provinces in this region, we find that the governor, appointed from Addis Ababa, had full powers, except that a judicial appeal lay to the capital. He and his soldiers lived off the land and he could make grants of it and confer titles which were, however, valid only in the province and during his governorship. While Amharas held the more important district headships and collected the customs and the tithe of the crop, the lesser officials, as in Jimma, were the old Galla chiefs (*aba koro*) who had powers only over other Gallas and never over Amharas. They drew no pay and had to be supported by their tribes. They looked after roads and bridges, saw to the levying of tribute, forced labour and the coffee due to the crown, settled local disputes, built the soldiers' camps, and were responsible for hospitality to strangers. They performed many of the duties of the *chiqa-shums* in other provinces, but their status was different. They were in fact, as Cerulli remarks, in relation to the Amharas, very much in the position of local native chiefs under European administration. The Amharas imported some Christian Gallas from elsewhere to hold some of these chieftainships, but these are said to have been very unpopular with the Muslim people.

The military practice almost universal in the south may be illustrated from Limmu. Menelik quartered some of his own soldiers in eastern Limmu, and families of the Galla inhabitants were made into *gabars*, each one obliged to support a soldier. A *dejazmach* was appointed from Addis Ababa to rule this military colony quite independently of the governor of Limmu. Cerulli lists the obligations of these Galla *gabars* to the Amhara soldiers. They had to build his hut and to provide, according to his will, all that he required from them of their agricultural produce, meat and honey. They had to bring wood and water and work in the hut, and provide food and transport during a campaign.[2] The *gabar* families were registered upon a list and it was the duty of the local headman to see that there were enough of them to support the soldiers. In practice they were bound to their masters. If, however, one of them, abandoning his house and land, should escape outside the borders of the province, he could not be captured and returned to his master. This was the one advantage which the southern *gabar* might gain from the theory that, unlike the slave, he was free in his person.

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[1] Cerulli, vol. 1, chapter 11.

[2] These particulars given by Cerulli agree with those collected by F. de Halpert.

Further west lay the larger Wallaga group of Gallas, who appear to have largely escaped Muslim influence and were pagan or Christian according to the closeness of their contact with the Amharas. No complete study has ever been made of their conditions and government. Menelik, it seems, left them in part under their Galla chiefs, but here, too, the tendency was for them to come increasingly under the central control. One interesting exception was Wallaga Leka. Its Galla ruler was made *dejazmach* by Menelik, though, as in Jimma, the people still referred to their ruler under the Galla name for kings, *Moti*. The last hereditary ruler, who succeeded in 1923, was *Dejazmach* Habta Mariam. He had some degree of autonomy, though the collection of customs was taken over by Amhara officials in 1933. He was young, educated, Christian, and loyal to the Emperor, and even went across the border into Gojjam upon one occasion to put down unrest in that Amhara province. He is said to have been murdered by the Italians when they took over his province, even though he was unable to resist them.

Wallaga was reputed to be a rich and progressive Galla region. The Gallas had pushed northwards across the Blue Nile and were disputing the western escarpment of Gojjam with the Amharas only a generation ago. Ras Hailu's father, the *Negus* Takla Haimanot, had to recognize their conquest of some of the Wanbera highlands, but he treated them kindly and built them a church and many were converted to Christianity. They brought with them excellent coffee plants and made skilful use of their agricultural opportunities on the fertile hills around Kitar.[1]

THE SOUTH-EASTERN GALLAS

The large province of Harar has a longer and more interesting history than any of the other subject territories. Though not wholly Galla, it is sufficiently so to come under this heading. It was the protagonist of Islam against Ethiopian Christianity. The earliest rounds in the conflict are obscure. It is possible that the Muslims began to establish themselves on the western coast of the Red Sea as early as the ninth or eighth century. The first Ethiopian records show constant fighting in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Muslim kingdoms of Ifat, Hadya, and Adel, the exact confines and relationships of which have not been unravelled, dominated the Red Sea coast and, as they reached beyond the Awash Valley to the edges of the Shoan highlands, Harar probably became the main Muslim centre instead of Zeila. It is certain that at times the kingdom of Ifat, on the very borders of Shoa, paid tribute to the Ethiopian ruler in the middle ages, but this seems to have been rather in the form of reparations after defeat in war than the symbol of a fixed submission. At other times mass conversions to Islam were forced upon the defeated Shoans.[1] Alvarez describes the large kingdom of Adel, and how its king made war on Ethiopia every Lent when the Christians were weak with fasting, and how he was reputed a saint by the Moors for his wars on the Christians and for sending the spoils to Mecca and Cairo.[2] In the sixteenth century, with the Portuguese assisting the Ethiopians and the Turks supporting the Muslims, the wars became a frontier incident in a much wider conflict. The destructive invasion of Mohammed Grañ launched from Adel marked the peak of Muslim aggression, and the exhaustion of both sides opened the way for Galla infiltration into the region at their expense.

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[1] Cheesman, *op. cit.*, pp. 344 ff.

As the tide of Muslim power ebbed back during the seventeenth century the city of Harar, founded in the middle ages, was left within its sixteenth-century walls and buildings, as the main centre of Islam in this region and an outpost against Christian Ethiopia. It was also the centre of a very fertile region. The surrounding Muslim emirates had declined or dissolved, and Harar was surrounded by Galla groups, some of which it converted to Islam, while some remained pagan. In this sea of barbarous, partly nomadic and Hamitic-speaking people, it retained its mercantile and religious life, and its particular Semitic language, the origin of which, whether Arabian or Ethiopian, has long been disputed. According to some authorities, including Paulitshke, the Harari represent an early intrusion of Ethiopians who were later cut off and converted to Islam. Another view is that the Semitic element in the language is due to an early migration directly from Arabia.[3] The peculiar Harar physical type is probably the result of centuries of breeding within the city from the mixture of races recruited through slavery, pilgrimage, and commercial movement; Arab, Egyptian, Somali, Galla, and Amhara.

Harar was fanatical in its religion and a closed city to infidels. In the nineteenth century several European travellers tried to enter it, but it was not until 1855 that Captain Burton in the disguise of a Muslim merchant, which he threw off at the last moment, succeeded in this venture. In his self-conscious and mannered prose he describes Harar as a centre of the slave-trade and also of pilgrimage, proud of her learning, sanctity, and holy dead, and 'inundating the surrounding city with poor scholars and crazy "Widads"'.[1] Paradoxically, with this cult of Islam went great laxity of morals and excessive drinking,[2] and the Harari are still notorious for their cultivation and constant chewing of the narcotic plant, *khat.* Harar was the half-way house for the large slave-trade which came from southern Ethiopia and the countries farther south on the way to the coast.[3] In 1875 the *Khedive* Ismail, of Egypt, then in his period of imperial activity, took Harar and held it for eleven years with a large and expensive garrison. Egypt was obliged, as part of the imperial deflation imposed upon her by the tutelary British, after the Dervish revolt, to abandon Harar in 1886. To the distress of the foreign merchants who had flocked, under the comparatively civilized rule of Egypt, to this important commercial centre, on the initiative of Britain another intolerant local Emir was set up in Harar. His rule was short. By massacring an Italian geographical party, he gave Menelik, then an ally of Italy, occasion to intervene in 1887.

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[1] Cerulli, I, 'La lingua e la storia di Harar', *Studi Etiopici*, I, Rome, 1936, especially pp. 1–23, 32–3.

[2] Alvarez, p. 346.

[3] See Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 1, p. 246, note 6. An important authority on this question is Paulitshke, P., *Harar*, Leipzig, 1888.

The quarter-of-an-hour battle of Chalanko, in which Menelik routed the Harari and seized the city, was one more round—and, we may hope, the last—in the long conflict of religion and power in this region between Christendom and Islam, a delayed revenge for the sixteenth-century conquest of Ethiopia by Adel. It was also an economic event, for when Harar had recovered from the attentions of the Ethiopian army it again attracted the merchants of many nations who had taken the brief advantage of Egyptian rule. Traders in guns, like the French poet Rimbaud, and in cottons, silk, metals, hardware, sugar, and beads, exchanged their goods for the well-known Harari coffee, for musk, ivory, and coloured basket-work, while the slave-trade, at a more discreet level, remained of importance.[4] Harar, however, lost much of its economic importance when the new railway to the coast by-passed the city and stole the importance of the old caravan routes to the south.

Harar province was granted to the able and enlightened Ras Makonnen, Menelik's cousin, and thus came down as a family appanage to his son, Tafari, who was educated by the French Roman Catholic missionaries in the city of Harar. Many European travellers have left accounts of their visits to the progressive Ras and described his charming hospitality in the old city.

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[1] Burton, R. F., *First Footsteps in East Africa*, 2 vols., 1894, vol. 2, p. 14. *Widad* is a Somali term which, formerly applied to heathen magicians, has been transferred to Muslim scholars. See *Encyclopedia of Islam.*

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 18.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 27.

[4] See Starkie, E., *Arthur Rimbaud in Abyssinia*, 1937, for an excellent and well-documented account of Harar at this period.

The Ethiopian Government was able to tame the Gallas more effectively than had ever been possible for the Harari rulers. Harar became the capital of a new province of about 80,000 square miles, and the region, now part of a still larger whole, enjoyed greater security, and therefore greater prosperity, than before. The Jibuti railway, built about 1896, though it by-passed the city, benefited the province by greatly stimulating the long-established production of coffee, which is grown and often irrigated on the thousands of small plots belonging to the industrious Galla cultivators. Harar under Makonnen and again under Haile Selassié was better governed than the other provinces. The city itself was in many ways much improved. There was greater security, the streets were cleaner and somewhat better paved, and were lighted. Slavery and the harsh southern type of the institution of the *gabar* were, of course, found there, as elsewhere. There were, however, several alleviating factors: among these were the greater care taken in the selection of officials; the nearness to the capital and to the imperial lord of the province; perhaps, also, the presence of many foreigners and the need to consider the stubborn Muslim element. The province in the years before 1935 was put under some good governors who understood what their master wanted. Among them were Ras Imru and *Dejazmach* Habta Mariam, a Guragé killed fighting the Italians in 1937. Even so, the degree of prosperity and security to which parts of Harar had attained served to show all the more clearly how much more prosperous its people might have been if they could have increased their production without fear of the army of petty and often corrupt officials who came round to assess their crops, gather the tithes into the grain-pits, and collect the other dues.

An interesting experiment was made in Chercher, a district which was detached from the province in 1934 and put first under Takla Hawariat, the last Ethiopian representative at the League of Nations, and then under Dr. Martin, the Ethiopian who was brought up in India and who afterwards became minister in London. The latter (whom the writer was able to meet in England) worked out with the Emperor a plan of reformed administration which included the payment of tithe in cash instead of kind and, as a sequence, the payment of salaries to officials; an active anti-slavery policy; the employment of educated men in government posts, and the provision of village schools, medical help, and earth roads. Moreover, a new town, Asba Tafari, was founded. Even though it was probably not possible to carry out the plan of a model province in full, yet there is evidence that Chercher began to attract immigrants, a very practical proof of the benefits of reform.

The great majority of the peoples of Harar province were at least nominally Muslim. They do not appear to have suffered from any great religious intolerance at the hands of their Christian rulers. The Emperor encouraged the entry of three Christian missions into the province, Roman Catholic, Swedish, and the Bible Churchmen's Society, and many churches were built around and even within the city of Harar. Yet Harar, with its Muslim holy men and widely branching confraternities, remained a Muslim centre, and in spite of the toleration of the Ethiopians and an administration that was certainly more efficient than that of the old emirs, it is unlikely that its religious leaders, with their almost Mahdist traditions, felt very active loyalty and affection towards their Amhara rulers. From these they were divided by the memory of their former independence and by a religious gulf which precluded close social intercourse and any intermarriage. Links, however slight and intermittent, existed between its leaders and their co-religionists in Egypt and especially with those of the Cairo centre of Muslim studies at El Azhar.

THE SOUTHERN GALLAS

Little information is available about the administration of the southern Galla provinces of Arusi, Bale, and Borana. According to two French observers who wrote in 1925 they were partly pagan and partly Muslim, and retained a *gada* system of five cycles of eight years each.[1] The Arusi Gallas were conquered by Menelik with great difficulty after three campaigns. At first there was no garrison, the province paying tribute, but later the Emperor settled a large army upon the province. As the population was very sparse this was a heavy burden upon the subject people who became *gabars* to the soldiers.

The Arusi are said to be especially tall and have a reputation for truculence and murderous vendettas with neighbouring tribes. The country was certainly not pacified by 1923, since in that year Mr. Rey, when travelling in this province, reported that he could see nightly from his camp 'the reflected light of the burning villages and crops in the fighting zone', where the Arusi were still quarrelling among themselves in true Galla fashion. He was told that during the last six years no fewer than 5,000 men had been killed in the desultory fighting that went on between them and the Guragés. A punitive expedition had been sent in by the government which had brought away between 20,000 and 30,000 head of cattle.[2]

[1] Azaïs and Chambard, *op. cit.*, pp. 207–9.

[2] Rey, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

There must have been more peaceful and less oppressive conditions under the present Emperor as later observers remarked upon the great size of the Arusi herds of cattle. A rich cattle-owner might have 1,000 to 2,000 head of stock. The country produces the best quality honey in Ethiopia and its coffee is held to be best after that of Harar.[1] Varying in altitude from 3,500 to 9,000 feet it is possible in this one province to find grass plains suitable for ranching and hills covered with wild coffee trees.

The Muslim Galla province of Bale covered in its 1935 boundaries about 50,000 square miles and sloped down from 10,000 feet in the north to the low-lying Ogaden, where the Somalis roam with their herds. Though the backward Gallas of the higher lands still cling to the pastoral life they are turning increasingly to agriculture, following the example of Amhara soldier colonists. In Bale the Gallas of the higher northern part were estimated at about seven to the square mile in density. The sparse population had hard work to supply the soldiers, and suffered from oppressive exactions. In 1932 the Emperor decided to reform its administration and sent a progressive governor, who was instructed to abolish forced labour in favour of individual Amharas and to impose a fixed tax and to pay the soldiers. It is not possible to say whether these reforms were effective in the three years following 1932.

Borana in the extreme south is entirely inhabited by Gallas, and has been regarded as the cradle of the race, after their arrival in Africa, and the region where the purest type of Gallas is found. They are still partly pagan.[2] The Boran Gallas, who live to the south along the Kenya frontier, were administered by the governor of Sidamo through his representative stationed at Mega. A few hundred Amhara soldiers were distributed along the frontier in various centres where slaves from Sidamo tribes cultivated for them. Some of these escaped from time to time and there was a settlement for fugitive ex-slaves from Ethiopia at Marsabit in Kenya.

Because of the constant disputes along this remote and uncivilized borderland, and of the competition among the tribes for water and grazing, a British consul was stationed in Borana. We are fortunate in having an account of conditions there written by Mr. (later Sir Arnold) Hodson who held this post for seven years during and after the first world war. He records that the Ethiopian Government had no control east of Moyale and that elsewhere it was merely nominal. The province was treated at this time as if it were the private property of *Fitaurari* Habta Giyorgis, who remained in Addis Ababa, and it was difficult to make service in this distant, low-lying country attractive to his agents and soldiers who had to live upon it. The population was not large and the soldiers pressed so hardly upon the *gabars* allotted to them that many of these fled to the bush or into British territory. The governor, urged on by his soldiers, pressed the British authorities to round them up and send them back.[1] The British were torn between their desire to protect the refugees and their unwillingness to deprive their own tribes of the very limited and capricious water and grazing.[2]

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[1] Veroi, *op. cit.*, pp. 107–8.

[2] Rossini, *Etiopia*, p. 329.

During Mr. Hodson's consulship many of the soldiers and even the local judge took to brigandage, murdering the Boran Gallas and looting their cattle. There seems, indeed, to have been little distinction between soldiers and brigands both as to personnel and activities.[3] The tribesmen, with few rifles, were helpless and cowed. 'The next day', writes Mr. Hodson, referring to a journey with the Ethiopian governor, 'the country we passed through was entirely deserted by natives. There were not even Boran to draw water for the troops and their animals. Commenting on this, the *Dejazmach* asked what was the good of this country to them now that there was not a single living soul in it.' The only conclusion he drew from this situation was that the British must return 4,000 Boran *gabars* who had sought refuge across the frontier.[4] Judging by the reports from Kenya, there was some improvement, as far as international incidents were concerned, in the two or three years before the Italian conquest, when the raids were mostly from the low-lying western region which the Amhara did not care to enter.

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[1] Hodson, A. W., *Seven Years in Southern Abyssinia*, 1927, pp. 252 ff.

[2] Descriptions of the frontier and of British relations with Ethiopian officials will be found in the sections upon the northern frontier and Turkana provinces in the annual reports of the Kenya Native Affairs Department.

[3] Hodson, *op. cit.*, pp. 203–4, 225 ff.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 253.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE SOUTHERN PROVINCES:[1] SIDAMO REGION

SIDAMO

This word has been used to describe the non-Galla, Hamitic-speaking peoples in the south-west of the present Ethiopia who, while closely similar in race and, originally, it may be supposed, in institutions to the peoples further north, did not receive the Semitic blood and Christian influences that were the main factors of Ethiopian unity and character. The word Cushitic is sometimes given to them, but as this has a much wider application, Sidamo seems a more convenient name. This use of the term should be distinguished from its other use to describe one of the pre-1935 provinces.

There are, as we saw in the historical introduction, isolated relics of the original Hamitic-speaking people, not yet assimilated to the Amharas in the north.[2] The word Agau is used of them as a general—indeed, too general—term. The following language groups may be included under it:

Kamir: Lasta and Wag.
Kamta: a small district in North Lasta.
Kaila: north of Dembea.
Kemant: Dembea.

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[1] In this and in the following chapter a dark picture is given of Ethiopian administration in the south-west. It must be remembered that reliable material upon the administration of these regions is very scanty. Such as it is, it all points in the same direction, and the evidence was confirmed by F. de Halpert in his travels in these regions in 1934. If this section should persuade Ethiopian or other readers to amplify the evidence and help towards the production of a fuller and perhaps more favourable picture, this result would be welcomed by the writer.

[2] See above, pp. 11, 32–3, 40.

Kwara: Kwara, west of Lake Tana.
Awiya: Agaumdir, south of Kwara.
Damotinya: Damot, south-east of Agaumdir.

It would be an anthropological diversion to consider these scattered northern groups further as they no longer present a serious administrative problem. Our interest must be in the more solid, more recently conquered Sidamo peoples of the south-west. Seven chief languages have been classified as follows:

Gongo: south of Gojjam, between the Abbai and the Galla country. (This represents an outlying group.)
Janjero: on the right bank of the Omo, about latitude 7° 40′ N.
Kafficho: mainly in Kaffa.
Walamo: Between Kaffa and the Rift Valley Lakes.
Kambata and Gudella: between the Walamo and Guragé countries.
Amar: on the heights east of Lakes Abaya and Shamo.
Sidamo: spoken by the Jummjumm, Badditu, and tribes about the head-waters of the Ganale.[1]

It will be seen that this group of peoples live along the Omo river and the great Rift Valley with its chain of lakes, both of these features running from south to north through the south-western highlands which are much gentler in contours and more wooded than the northern mountains. Soleillet, who wrote in 1886, counted fourteen Sidamo states, including Kaffa, before the conquest.[2] It would not be easy to-day to distinguish clearly the separate groups. Most of them are small, and some have been broken up by Galla and Amhara invasion. We know, for example, that the old kingdom on the border of Ethiopia, Enarea, had first begun to receive Christianity in the middle of the sixteenth century and shortly afterwards was invaded by the Gallas, some of the Christians taking refuge in Kaffa.[3] Among the surviving Sidamo groups or region to which a single name is given there may be one or two strata between the ruling Amharas and servile castes at the bottom. All must have been dominated by Kaffa in its prime and some may be broken relics of this state. Very few serious observers have travelled in these regions and the only group about which much is known, especially from the administrative standpoint, is the largest Sidamo unit, that of the ancient kingdom of Kaffa.

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[1] This and the preceding classification have been taken from the *Handbook*, p. 47. Other classifications add the Ometo dialect round the middle Omo and Gimirra, south-west of Kaffa. Each language has many dialects.

[2] Soleillet, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

[3] Guèbrè Sellassié, p. 462, n. 2.

KAFFA

The first account of Kaffa is that given by Alvarez. He was not able to go up to the country himself but he records all that he could learn. The people were not very dark; they were tall and said to be more subtle than any in the country and to be pagans and great warriors always at war with Ethiopia. The claim was made towards the end of the sixteenth century that the Ethiopian Emperor Sarsa Dengel had converted Kaffa to Christianity, but from later evidence it appears that the conversion did not go very deep. Then the Gallas began to flow in between the kindred if hostile Amhara and Sidamo people, and Kaffa was left to isolation in its own hills and forests. It remained a mere name and a mystery to the outside world until half-way through the nineteenth century. Surrounded by a waste zone, in which lay concealed pits and through which entry to border markets could be made only through defended points, Kaffa hid herself jealously from the world. Tribes which could see her mountains rising a hundred miles away professed ignorance of her institutions. The curtain rose only a little and for a short time before the old Kaffa vanished with the destruction of the kingdom by Menelik. D'Abbadie, the first European known to have entered Kaffa, spent eleven days at the market centre of Bonga in 1843. Capuchin monks founded a mission there in 1845 and discovered some medieval churches which remained as evidence of the early infiltration of Christian influence before the invading Gallas divided the two peoples. The missionaries were banished by the Kaffa king a few years later, and between that date and the destruction of Kaffa only four or five Europeans reached the country. From their evidence the vanished kingdom has in part been reconstructed.

Kaffa was established by some people known as Gonga who were moving southwards from the Damot region of the Blue Nile in the middle ages. They probably found an earlier group of people similar to themselves as well as a still earlier and darker people of mixed Nilotic and Hamitic type, speaking a different language, of whom they made a servile caste. It is possible that the original home of the Kaffa civilization was in the regions of Sennar and that here they had been in contact with Egyptian influences. They may have been pressed south by the Christian Cushitic states on the Nile or later by the Arab invasions of the early middle ages and have taken up an intermediate position north of the present Kaffa. Here, however, they were bound to feel a new pressure, that of the growing Ethiopian power and culture. Just as the Agaus, and especially the state of Lasta, represented the original Hamitic-speaking Cushites against the Semiticized and Christianized

Cushites, so Kaffa made the same stand for a much longer period. It seems that in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Kaffa equalled or rivalled the then declining Ethiopia, and made many surrounding peoples pay tribute. Indeed, the Kaffa empire, though hard pressed by three centuries of warfare with the Gallas who overran the neighbouring kingdoms and tribes, yet maintained its power and even extended it to the west in the seventeenth century, and was able to make conquests as late as 1870 on the eve of its own fall.

As Shoa took up and revived the imperial power and conquered the intervening Gallas a fight to the death between the two was inevitable. The contrast between the institutions of the two show the great effect of Christianity and of some European contact upon the northern kingdom. Kaffa had the faults of its isolation, those of a long in-bred society. The country was priest-ridden. The Emperors were gods for whose well-being a man had to be sacrificed each year. These rulers were, indeed, 'divine Kings' of that type of kingship to which some reference has already been made and of which traces are thought to survive in many African monarchies from Ethiopia almost to the Atlantic coast.[1] The physical well-being of the whole people was bound up with that of the king. He was presented to his people behind a veil, and his six great counsellors, before entering his presence and prostrating themselves, put off their regalia and dressed as slaves.[2]

The Kafficho, as the ruling peoples were called, incorporated immigrant Muslim groups who came down in the sixteenth century and who became the trading element. Some sections, as a result of Amhara influence, and, perhaps also of immigration, became Christian, though the new religion was said to be blended with the old paganism and especially with the cult of the god Yeko.

In 1897 Menelik attacked Kaffa with the aid of Kaffa's old enemy, Jimma. The Kafficho fought hard, and it took three bloody campaigns to overthrow them. Even in defeat the pride of the ancient dynasty was not broken. The captive king demanded fetters of gold, and, when led before Menelik, is said to have spoken these words: 'You think yourself a great king, but your claim bears no comparison with mine. Your crown was placed upon your head by the hands of man. Mine came down to me straight from Heaven on high.' So deep and possibly dangerous was the significance of this crown to the Kafficho that, according to Montandon, Menelik asked his Swiss adviser to take it away to his own country. The Kaffa king was imprisoned, bound in golden chains; later he was released, but kept in poverty-stricken exile in Addis Ababa.

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[1] See Bieber. Bieber went through Ethiopia in 1905 and 1909 and is the leading authority on Kaffa, having published the classic study of that kingdom.

[2] Cecchi, V. di A., *Da Zeila alla frontiere del Caffa*, Rome, 1886–7, vol. 2, p. 488.

Although the Ethiopians, like many other conquerors, left the surviving subordinate chiefs in charge of their peoples, each with an Amhara official and tax collector over him, European writers are emphatic about the exceptional destructiveness of the conquest of Kaffa as regards both the life and the culture of this interesting people. Bieber and Soleillet had emphasized the number of the population and the intensity of the cultivation,[1] but now the main centres and sacred places were laid waste, and the prosperity of the country, which abounded in wild coffee, was, at least for the time, crushed. A Russian who went as an officer in Ras Walda Giyorgis's invading army says that Kaffa, formerly almost a fairy story country for its wealth of honey, grain, ivory and musk, cattle and horses, and for its manufacture of excellent cloth and weapons, was now a desert.[2] This deterioration is described by Bieber, who visited the country in 1905 and recounts how, after only a few years of rule under the iron hand of the Shoans, the native culture had almost disappeared. He admits that the Amharas had introduced their own law and order, but quotes the Galla proverb, 'Where the Amhara tread the grass grows no more', and says that the desire of the Amharas to enrich themselves quickly had greatly impoverished the country. The first governor had, indeed, attempted something better, but his successors and their host of petty officials were not so restrained and hence the Kafficho, a docile people, found it useless to grow more crops as the increase would go only to their masters. The country had been despoiled of its cattle, wrote Montandon, who visited it in 1910,[3] and many of the old ruling people were now serfs to the Amharas. Bieber himself, and Major Athill, who visited the country in 1920, noticed, half-smothered in forest growth, evidence of the once numerous population, and Montandon,[4] Athill,[5] Hodson,[6] and Grühl[7] all state that they saw long files of slaves leaving the province. The latest evidence for the period before 1935 comes from F. de Halpert who visited Kaffa in 1934 and who writes as follows:

'Menelik quartered his soldiers upon Kaffa, Here, as in some other provinces, there were two types of garrison. First, there were about

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[1] See for example, Soleillet, *op. cit.*, pp. 188 ff., and Bieber, vol. 1, pp. 168 and 353 ff.

[2] Bieber, vol. 1, p. 20.

[3] Montandon, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

[5] Darley, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

[6] Hodson, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

[7] Grühl, M., *The Citadel of Ethiopia*, 1932, pp. 200–1.

2,000 of the old soldiers of the original garrison, which remained after the conquest under Menelik in 1891. These were directly under the central government. Many were old men, and others, who had died, had been succeeded by their sons, who had married local wives and become permanent residents of the country. When the army was mobilized for war against Italy, some of the men protested against being moved, on the ground that they were a permanent garrison and not subject to the same service as the governor's more mobile army.

'The last governor brought with him an army which was nominally about 3,000 strong, and was partly drawn from his home country and partly recruited in Addis Ababa, where the ras had been resident for some time as a minister. These soldiers, like the others, were served by Kaffa peasants and had no remuneration except the produce and service of these *gabars*. Many of the soldiers, however, finding that Kaffa was not the land of promise they had hoped for, deserted and returned to Addis Ababa to seek service with another master or to earn their living otherwise.

'The governors had assured their own material needs by securing large estates by purchase or expropriation. It was estimated that a fourth of the land in Kaffa was owned by great Amhara land owners. Ras Walda Giyorgis, Ras Getachew, the last governor, *Dejazmach* Taye, Ras Getachew's sister, and the Minister of Finance in Addis Ababa, were all large land owners. The land is fertile and rich in coffee, and these nobles drew large revenues from it, as it was let to tenants who paid as rent a third of their crop and supplied their own oxen. As a privilege granted by the Emperor to his favourites or to men who had rendered him services, these landlords not only owned the land but were entitled to the taxes from it. The people preferred working for these great landlords, for they were thereby protected from the extortions of the petty officials and soldiers. Owing to the diminution of the population there was competition for labour and there was a tendency for *gabars* to escape to the estates of the great landlords, who were glad to keep them as tenants and often prevented them from being reclaimed. Travellers were always struck by the air of peace and prosperity in the land owned by these great nobles, as it was in marked contrast to the surrounding country, which, although equally fertile and productive, was covered with half-empty forest and jungle, a direct result of the lack of public security and the misrule of the Amhara officials.' Although most of the land had reverted to forest, the trace of ownership was not lost. The owners of land were remembered and the knowledge passed down from father to son. An Amhara squatter who cleared a piece of land for himself would be found out by the rightful owner or his representative, and, under a just governor, the latter might obtain a decision in his favour.

'An enlightened governor, Ras Desta, who made a genuine effort to bring some order into the chaos of Kaffa, upheld the cause of the Kaffa natives who claimed the right to dispossess Amhara soldiers who had actually built houses on the land which they had arrogated to themselves. The Amharas left after burning their houses. The Kaffa owners resumed their ownership and worked on their land, but it was not long before the Amhara officials swooped upon them and demanded taxes and forced labour and, after a short time, the Kaffa owners again abandoned their homes and the land reverted to bush. The soldier settlers, with insufficient labour and without security of tenure, could not clear and cultivate forest land and, as a result, rich coffee-producing soil, which both Kafficho and Amhara wished to till, was left untended.[1]

'Kaffa was a very important source of the slave trade. The governors were the worst offenders in this matter, and until quite recently they adopted the attitude that the acquisition of slaves was a perquisite of their office. The governor Ras Getachew enslaved many hundred Kaffa natives during his first term of office as governor of this province in 1926. However, when in 1933 he was expressly sent by the Emperor to put down slavery in this part of the country, he mended his ways and, although the trade in slaves continued under his administration, he himself did not take part in it. Some years ago a departing governor left with 600 slaves, and three months later his deputy followed him with 400. On being remonstrated with by a European he replied, "What am I to do? I have to pay for my appointment. I have debts to pay and I may lose my employment at any moment." In 1933 the deputy of the governor sent a batch of fifty slaves to be sold in Jimma, and, as the expenses of governors when travelling were very heavy, it was the custom of governors to sell slaves on the way in payment of some of the cost. Resistance or protest was not to be expected, since the slavery laws were unknown to the population and the officials in these parts ignored them. It was small wonder that a Kaffa native, who was the slave of an Amhara at Addis Ababa, upon being offered a chance of freedom and return to his country, refused it, saying that freedom in Kaffa was worse than slavery away from it.

'Judging by the traces of abandoned villages and cultivation, the population probably decreased by about three quarters in the fifty years before 1936. The old commerce died out. A traveller would rarely see a Kaffa native on the tracks and often when he did the native would flee in fear. Public security was at a low level.'[1]

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[1] 'Why should we cultivate coffee and obtain more berries than we need for our own use?' asked a Kaffa man of Grühl. 'The Habeshi would only take them away from us.' Grühl, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

GURAGÉ

Guragé is the fertile and mountainous district on the south-western border of Shoa and the Guragé language is spoken by about 350,000 people. It is difficult to know where to place this province as ethnologists have not yet decided upon the origins of this people. It may be, on the one hand, that they form geographically the northernmost of this collection of Sidamo tribes. On the other hand it is possible that they are the last southward outpost of the Amhara-Tigré people, rather than the most northerly of the Sidamo. According to this view, their language, though split into several sections with distinct dialects, is held to be sufficiently Semitic to uphold their claim to be a colony from Tigré, cut off from the north by the Galla intrusion. Cohen, however, raises the interesting question whether, with the Harari, they may not result from a direct and early Semitic emigration from southern Arabia.[2] They may, however, be included here for convenience.

In the early sixteenth century, Alvarez, who camped with the Emperor close to the Guragé kingdom, describes how the Amharas had brought Christianity to its very borders by the erection of a monastery upon a great rock, approached by a movable ladder.[3] In view of the later docility and industry of these people it seems strange to read that they had the reputation of being 'very bad' and should have been regarded as unsuitable even for slavery owing to their determination to die or kill themselves rather than serve Christians. Long isolated as Guragé was from the Amhara by the Galla, it was not until about 1840 that King Sahla Selassié of Shoa began to call himself King of Guragé, and it was Menelik who carried out the complete conquest between 1875 and 1889.[4] The old kingdom was by 1935 divided politically into several groups and divided by religion into Christians, Muslims, and pagans. Its peoples were said to have, nevertheless, a great sense of kinship as against their neighbours.[5]

The Guragé depend mainly on their herds, though they have some cultivation, for which they use a rudimentary plough. They are a very industrious people, but smiths, carpenters, and turners form inferior classes and are not allowed to own land. Guragé pottery is very much prized. They have always gone in large numbers to work in the lowest ranks as porters and sweepers in Addis Ababa. The men dress like the Amharas: the women wear ox-skins, and the numerous rings of brass wire on the arms and ankles and in the ears which characterize the Masai and other pastoral tribes in British territory. Varying opinions are given of them, one of the most favourable being that they are the best-looking and most intelligent people of Ethiopia.[1] Perhaps for this reason they were very much prized as slaves, and even as late as 1878, in spite of being a clearly kindred and partly Christian people, Guragé slaves were openly sold in the slave market.[2] Their abilities, however, often led to their advancement, as freedmen, to important positions.

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[1] This is the end of the passage by F. de Halpert.

[2] Cohen, M., *Études d'éthiopien méridional*, Paris, 1931, pp. 49–52. Also Rossini, *Etiopia*, pp. 134 ff.

[3] Alvarez, pp. 293–4.

[4] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 1, p. 124, n. 4.

[5] Rossini, *Etiopia*, p. 133.

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[1] Azaïs and Chambard, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

[2] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 604.

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE SOUTHERN PROVINCES: THE NEGRO, SOMALI, AND DANAKIL REGIONS

THE NEGRO PROVINCES

The negro peoples within the Ethiopian empire, for centuries known by the term of contempt, Shankalla, are mostly concentrated in a strip running along the western frontier for some 1,200 miles from the Eritrean border to Lake Rudolf. The strip is broadest towards its base in the hilly and forested country in the south and tapers towards the north. Here the negroes cling to the lower levels of the Ethiopian massif where it goes down in broken steps to the Sudan plains, country which, because of its heat and fever, is not attractive to the Amhara highlanders. In the south, however, they are found on the high borders of the plateau.

The writer must repeat, however wearisome the iteration, that there is a great lack of authoritative information about most of these negro tribes. Very few Europeans have visited them in parts away from the few routes of communication and scientific ethnological information is almost wholly lacking.[1] Consuls appointed from the Sudan and stationed at Maji, Goré, and Gambela, have written reports which lie in the archives at Khartoum, but these are not for publication. It has, however, been possible for the writer, during visits to the Sudan, to learn something about conditions in the borderlands. It is satisfactory that for parts of the southern region we have some direct evidence, collected at the end of the period covered in this chapter, from F. de Halpert.

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[1] See Seligman, C. G. and B., *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, for an account of tribes along the Ethiopian border, some of which are to be found upon both sides.

A list of twenty different languages spoken by the negro groups has been compiled,[1] but no claim is made that this is complete, and it will be less confusing, in a book that makes no pretension to be anthropological, to deal with these peoples in their main administrative regions, running from north to south.

GUBA AND BENI-SHANGUL

The northern part of the negroid strip fringes the west of the old Ethiopian provinces as the northern Gallas fringe the east, and it is here that there has been the longest contact between Amharas and negroes. Bruce describes the position of the great marcher-lords of Kwara, north of Guba, who had to hold the frontier escarpment against the ancient Fung kingdom of Sennar, which, for a period, paid tribute to Ethiopia. He also describes how in those days there was an annual season for hunting negroes as they ventured from their fastnesses to plant their crops. The older people were massacred when the governors collected their tribute of young males and females for dispatch to the *Negus*.[2] Salt, in 1810, found the Ethiopians continuing this annual recreation; he reports 'frequent skirmishes with the Shankalla, whom the Abyssinians barbarously consider it a kind of sport to hunt down'.[3] The whole frontier with the Sudan was, indeed, a most lawless region. This lawlessness was due, it must be stated, in part to the inadequacy of the administration on the Sudan side. This was seldom close enough to hold back the marauding elements from the Ethiopian side and Sudan tribes would sometimes revenge themselves upon their despoilers. There is thus something to be learned about this region from the annual reports published by the Sudan Government, though allowance must be made for the distaste with which these frontier districts, with their wearisome records of raids, were viewed from Khartoum.

Guba, the unhealthy negroid region north of the Blue Nile, was entered by few Ethiopians and was practically closed to Europeans. Cheesman, who went through it in 1929, found elephant and lion, and travelled once for a fortnight without seeing a single inhabited village. It appears that many of the people had moved into the Sudan.[4] The governor was *Dejazmach* Abu Shok, a Muslim who had succeeded his father in this position, and who claimed to be a descendant of the Fung dynasty of the once famous kingdom of Sennar in the Sudan.[5]

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[1] *Handbook* p. 48.

[2] Bruce, vol. 2, pp. 545–52.

[3] Salt, H., *A Voyage to Abyssinia*, 1814, p. 307.

[4] Cheesman, *Lake Tana*, p. 361.

[5] The writer saw members of this family on the border; they were very black and of negroid appearance. Bruce calls Kwara an unhealthy province 'full of fugitives and fine horsemen', the fugitives being from Sennar. Ethio-

Beni-Shangul, lying between the Yabus river and the Sudan, was also under a local chief who succeeded his father in this position. He was Sheik Khogali, member of a reputedly Arab clan, the Watawit, which, coming in from the Sudan, established its ascendancy in the early nineteenth century over the negroid people, and became partially assimilated to them. The Watawit were bilingual, speaking both Arabic and the language of the Berta, the local negroid tribe or groups of tribes which cover a large area in this region on both sides of the frontier.[1] The Berta are still for the most part a primitive and half-naked people who are said to be very fanatical when converted to Islam. Mainly as a result of his remote and uncongenial country, the chief's position was semi-autonomous. Gold was washed from the rivers and was the main source of his tribute to the Ethiopian Government. The Sheik kept part of the customs on the trade, mostly in coffee, which passed through his country from Gambela when that river port was closed, and he paid part of it to Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian Government probably showed wisdom in administering or rather in retaining this distant, unattractive and disorderly region through a local family which, perhaps, was alone able to keep some sort of order. The Sudan Government reports bear witness to the very independent position of the Sheik[2] and this was confirmed by an observer in Addis Ababa, who stated that Sheik Khogali held Beni-Shengul as a vassal province, dividing the revenues between himself and the Ethiopian Government. He adds that he governed sternly and that crime was rare, a view that would hardly have been confirmed in the Sudan.[3]

A German traveller who met Sheik Khogali in Addis Ababa about 1930 gave a striking description of his shrewd and impressive personality. The Sheik and his black Sudanese following in their turbans made an unusual picture in the capital, which, he said, he visited every two or three years. He claimed to have fought with the Mahdi, and to have been with the army that was defeated by Kitchener at Omdurman.[4] This is quite possible since this country had been part of the Egyptian Sudan until 1897, when it was conquered by the Ethiopians. Its contacts still lie mostly with the Sudan with which it is bound by cultural and economic links. The two governors sent their children to the Sudan to be educated; the governor of Guba copied Sudan uniforms

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pians appointed to posts in this region were not at that period expected to spend much of their time there. See the reference above, p. 294, to Bruce's governorship of Ras el Feel.

[1] Cerulli, chapter 17.

[2] Cmd. 4387/1932, p. 17.

[3] Zervos, *op. cit.*, pp. 331–3.

[4] Grühl, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

for his police, and every year slaves found refuge and took out freedom papers across the border.[1] In 1933, for example, 255 slaves from Beni-Shangul and Guba gained their freedom in this way in the Sudan; and a whole village of 126 people fled and were settled near Roseires. Indeed, the Watawit and even the governor himself, were for years a great problem to the Sudan Government because of their encouragement of poaching and slaving expeditions. In 1929 Khogali's wife was sentenced by a Sudan court to ten years' imprisonment for her share in a great slave kidnapping conspiracy extending into the Sudan.[2] In the last years of the old régime the Sheik grew more passive with advancing years. The invasion by Italy led to an outbreak of civil war in which Gallas and local Muslim chiefs combined to attack the Sheik.

The extreme difficulties presented by these hot, rocky, and almost untraversed wilds was painfully felt by the expeditions which, coming in from the Sudan at the beginning of the war of liberation, had to force their way through them in order to reach their first objective, Belaya, on the Gojjam escarpment. They found neither good roads nor water, the camels died by the hundreds, and the motor transport failed to get over the lava beds and thick bush.[3]

THE BARO SALIENT

Further south, where the country is almost inaccessible swamp for part of the year, the negroid borderlands were even more primitive and unruly than the provinces further north. The pastoral Nilotic negroes, Anuak and Nuer, were late in coming under any administrative control from the Sudan side, while the Ethiopian Government exercised a very intermittent supervision over their own Anuak from the provinces of Wallaga and Ilubbabor. The situation was thus very difficult and was made worse by the absurdly drawn frontier which cuts across the seasonal migrations of these pastoral tribes and which allows the Ethiopian border to jut in a great salient into the heart of the Sudan Anuak plains. The history of this area since 1930 was one of perpetual friction and raiding with the resulting long-drawn-out negotiations between the governments and their local representatives.

Thus, for example, in 1932 the Ethiopian Anuak raided the Beir tribe heavily for slaves seventy miles inside the Sudan frontier. This provoked the Sudan Nuer to follow their example. A meeting was arranged between Sudan officers and Ras Mulugeta in which the Ethiopian Government promised redress and compensation which were afterwards given. But at this time the Emperor appointed a Syrian Druse, Magid Abud, as his special agent with the Nilotic tribes on this border. This led to a conflict which a Sudan officer, at great risk, had to cross the frontier to settle.[1] In spite of protests this Syrian was given higher powers by the Emperor in the following year. The Gambela Anuak, however, rose against his extortions. He was wounded and with difficulty fought his way out with a Lewis gun, to the protection of the British police at Gambela, losing all his baggage and taxes and sixty of his men.[2] Episodes of this kind have been recorded from the Sudan side but there is no general record of administration, or of the lack of it, to provide a setting for them.

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[1] Cmd. 4387/1932, p. 17; Cmd. 4668/1933, pp. 14–15.

[2] Cmd. 3403/1929, p. 17.

[3] *The Abyssinian Campaigns*, *op. cit.*, pp. 56 ff. Also Allen, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–41.

SHOA-GIMIRRA

The traveller who left Kaffa on his way westwards towards the Sudan would cross the Shuro river and enter Shoa-Gimirra, a fertile country about 6,000 feet high. Here the people, who appear to be a mixed negro-Sidamo group, were made of sterner stuff than some of their neighbours and had revolted against the misrule of their Amhara overlords, who had sold their people into slavery for forty years and greatly reduced the population. We have some light upon this area in 1912, when the Swiss traveller, Montandon, visited it. Already at that time certain sections of the people, in this as in neighbouring provinces, had fled to forests or hills to escape the Amharas. Montandon reports the burning of villages, the seizure of the crops, and the pitiable files of those destined to be slaves passing another company along the paths—that of the corpses of those who had perished on the way.[3] He could see no hope for the Gimirra people. He calculated that their numbers had fallen from 100,000 to 20,000 in a few years, and he gave his chapter the heading 'La fin d'un peuple'.[4] Major Darley also reported seeing large columns of slaves being driven from this area.[5]

F. de Halpert has recorded his own observations in 1934 as follows:[6]

'This people, however, assisted by the broken and forested nature of the country, maintained their struggle against oppression until the time of the Italian invasion. A very active revolt had started in 1932 and was still in progress two years later. The chief of the rebels, who was once a slave in Shoa, had vowed revenge and declared that he would be crowned king at Addis Ababa. He fought a pitched battle against the governor in 1934 and defeated him, killing a number of his men. After that the governor limited his administration to the occupation of a few posts and the country immediately surrounding them and to the maintenance of communications with the adjoining province of Kaffa.

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[1] Cmd. 4387/1932, p. 18; Cmd. 4668/1933, pp. 15–16.

[2] Cmd. 5019/1934, pp. 14–15.

[3] Montandon, *op. cit.*, pp. 28 ff.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 279.

[5] Darley, *op. cit.*, pp. 130 ff.

[6] He spent seven months travelling on foot and on mule-back in Jimma, Kaffa, Maji, and the immediately neighbouring negro provinces in this year.

'The tribes, however, fought among themselves, and the weaker were sold into slavery in Jimma, Wallaga, and farther north. The people were much sought as slaves on account of their capacity for hard work. There was a subject people in the country known as Guno, who worked for three days in eight for their Shoa-Gimirra masters, who frequently sold them into slavery. A Guno slave who escaped from his master and returned to his own country was always in danger of being re-enslaved not only by the Amharas but by his own people.

'Owing to the inability of the governor to restore order, there were but few people settled near the governor's headquarters, which was a collection of rough buildings in a clearing in the forest. In return for protection and light taxation, a few of the tribesmen were persuaded to cultivate and thus support the small garrison of 200 which was all that the government could muster.

'Under a system whereby a garrison lived on the country, its size was limited not by the needs of the province but by the number of taxpayers able to support it. Misrule resulted in the reduction of a garrison to a point where the population became stronger than the rulers and, as in Shoa-Gimirra, nearly reduced them to impotence.

'The governor was connected with the royal family and was the grandson of the general who under the Emperor Menelik conquered the country. Besides the 200 men already mentioned, he had men in his other fiefs in Kaffa and Shoa, bringing up the total of his contingent in time of war to 1,000. It was this and his family connection which accounted for his appointment. He could not pay revenue to the Emperor's treasury, for the country was incapable of producing it. It was rather a question whether the central government should send to his assistance and restore order and administration.'

GOLDEA

F. de Halpert writes as follows:

'After leaving Shoa-Gimirra the traveller on his way to Maji in the west would travel through this province. Like their neighbours of Shoa-Gimirra, the Nilotic negroes of Goldea, called Tishana by the Ethiopians, eventually refused to submit to the slave-raiding exploitation of

Amhara governors and their troops, and were in a state of revolt in 1935.

'The governor of Kaffa, who was also governor of Goldea, was unable to restore order and gave up the struggle. The Tishana closed the direct route from Kaffa in the east to Maji and the Sudan, and forced the Amharas to use a circuitous route. The garrison was reduced to occupying four isolated posts, and soldiers dared not venture far afield for fear of being ambushed. The Maji garrison coming east to join the army in 1935 was attacked and suffered casualties in this area.

'The population were well armed, having accumulated rifles by dint of selling their own people into slavery. The governor of Kaffa had delegated his authority to a *fitaurari*, an able and conscientious man who tried to pacify the inhabitants by good administration. He succeeded in persuading those situated in the vicinity of military posts to settle down and cultivate their land on the understanding that they would not be asked to labour for the Amharas and that their tax would be limited to a tithe of their crops. These people were answering to good treatment, for they preferred security and some form of protection to the anarchy prevailing among their own people, who, in the absence of any administration, were continually fighting among themselves. The movement to return was not, however, strong. The people had long memories, and they had no assurance that the policy of conciliation would be continued by successive governors, since these officials never stayed for long, and during their tenure of office they had hitherto invariably robbed and enslaved the inhabitants.

'The soldiers, on their part, were far from satisfied. They were receiving no pay and no *gabars* to give them free labour services, and it was not safe to go slave-raiding. They lived by their own toil, supplemented by some grain from the governor's store. In Ethiopia, service far from Shoa was only acceptable if life were made easy and if there were opportunities to accumulate a little wealth in the shape of slaves and silver. Moreover, garrisons were sometimes forgotten or abandoned. One such garrison in a Goldea post had been stranded there for seven years despite protests and petitions. Their complaints remained unheard and they had to resign themselves to exile.'

BENESSO

De Halpert writes:

'To the west of Goldea and Shoa-Gimirra were the districts of Benesso and Gurafarda, which were governed by the Emperor's cousin, *Dejazmach* Taye, whose appointment to the remote west was tantamount to exile.

'Taye, while protecting the people of his own small province, gave refuge to slave traders and bandits. The governors of the adjoining provinces, although not over particular in matters of slavery, were unanimous in their complaints against Taye, whose subjects raided their own areas for slaves. Gurafarda and Benesso formed the highway between the slave recruiting areas of the south and south-east and the slave-markets of the Galla province of Wallaga and Ilubbabor in the north. Reforms in the adjoining territories were almost useless so long as Taye was allowed to stay in Benesso and make it a centre of slaving activities.'

MAJI

De Halpert writes:

'The last province to be encountered by the traveller passing south-west was Maji, which lay along the Sudan border and reached down to Lake Rudolf. The country is a hot plain out of which rise mountainous blocks upon which the people live. The headquarters of the government is on Maji mountain, and the groups of Maji natives living upon it were reduced to such absolute subjection by the soldiers that it little mattered whether they are called slaves or *gabars*.

'In order to show how far the exploitation of *gabar* labour may be pushed at the worst extreme it is worth detailing the value of the items which certain Maji natives, even in this case those enjoying the slight protection which employment by a local European gave them, had to produce annually for their masters.

		$
1.	Tax of a third of the monthly wage of about $9	36
2.	Contribution to cost of ploughing governor's land	1
3.	Church tax	1
4.	Contribution to cost of upkeep of telephone (which did not exist)	1
5.	Contributions towards rations required on journeys taken by the governor, about	3
6.	Tax of $1 on every head of stock, about	3
7.	Contribution of $1 for every Feast Day	6
8.	Value of grain contributed for the maintenance of postmaster and runners	6
9.	Tax for upkeep of post	1
10.	Value of grain payable to the *gabar's* master	12
		$70

'As the Maji soldiers also claimed the right to exact from these men four days' work a week or a cash equivalent, they might seize the residue of their wages to pay this due, leaving them to subsist on what they could produce for themselves or perhaps obtain from their masters: girls and boys under fifteen belonging to the *gabar's* family often had to live at their master's house and work for nothing.

'If Maji *gabars* fell behind in their payments—and of course no records were kept—they or their children might be sold as slaves, and there was a constant drain, especially of children, from the mountain. The frequent changes of governors bore hardly on the population. When Getachew's soldiers left Maji in 1933 they took over 1,000 Maji natives with them. The population of the mountain therefore fell sharply, until, of the large population inhabiting the area earlier in the century, only a few thousand remained. Two neighbouring groups resisted similar spoliation by the Amharas by force of arms, and both of these by 1935 had thrown off all government control. Still another section had taken refuge with *Dejazmach* Taye further north, and had joined with other refugees and bandits in making his province their headquarters for kidnapping and selling slaves. In 1929 Captain Holland, consul at Maji, wrote that the principal slave market in Ethiopia was in Taye's territory.'[1]

This makes unhappy reading, yet all the available information about these south-western negro districts, and especially Maji and Goldea, supports F. de Halpert's picture of the anarchic situation. Turning back to an earlier date we find that the wholesale destruction of these peoples had begun as soon as the Ethiopian soldiers and raiders reached these regions. Captain Wellby made a remarkable journey right through south-western Ethiopia at this time and he records the terror of the tribes at the approach of his Ethiopian escort because of the devastation that the Amharas had already brought. The people fled at the first sight of them, abandoning all their property. Granaries had been looted, the people shot down without mercy; some were living skeletons. He found this all the way from Lake Rudolf to the Sobat river. It was all the sadder because when his party came across still untouched tribes, they were received with touching friendliness and trust. Yet Wellby, a fair and generous man with a great liking for Ethiopians, blames the Europeans, who allowed the flow of firearms into the hands of people still unfit to use them.[2]

Major Darley, who visited Maji in 1909, and again in 1919, reported a serious worsening in the interval.[1] Mr. Hodson, the British consul in this area in the following years, describes Ethiopian policy there as wholly destructive and the conditions those of devastation and depopulation.[2] Official reports from the Sudan Government stated in 1923 that extensive raids were being made by Ethiopians upon the tribes between Maji and the Sudan border in the course of which the frontier was violated in pursuit of the fleeing negroes.[3] A few years later it was known even in the capital, which was for the most part ignorant of happenings in this far province, that there had been slave-raids in Maji on the pretext of rebellion.[4] In 1932, again, the Sudan Government reported that the Tid and Tirma negro groups of Maji province were being so harried by Ethiopian soldiery that they were fleeing into the Sudan and the British consul had stopped the soldiers pursuing them there.[5] These conditions continued during the next two years.[6] A vicious circle set in. As the population available to the soldiers declined through flight and the export of slaves, the Amharas demanded more and more services from a diminishing number of *gabars*. Faced by such a system the more virile or less accessible tribesmen revolted. In order to obtain slaves to exchange for guns with which to defend themselves, they made war upon neighbouring tribes, or even, in great need, sold their own children. Proclamations from Addis Ababa reforming slavery or the *gabar* institution were completely ignored in these regions. On the very eve of the Italian war the British minister reported that conditions of disorder and oppression in this region were as bad as they could be.[7]

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[1] End of quotation from F. de Halpert.

[2] Wellby, pp. 186 ff.

It was only after the beginning of the dispute with Italy which culminated in the Italian invasion that the Emperor took serious steps to deal with this situation. In June 1935 he declared the province *mad-bet* (i.e. under his direct rule), and appointed a reforming governor with Colonel Sandford as his adviser. Reference has already been made in the chapter on slavery to the immediate results of these appointments.[8]

'It was, indeed,' writes Mrs. Sandford, 'one of the problems facing my husband in his work as adviser to the governor of Maji that so many of the tribes accepted stoically, apathetically, the role of the under-dog and were unwilling to protect themselves and their families or to make any co-operative effort to do so.'[1] This was the result of long oppression, and though Colonel Sandford reported immediate results from the reformed administration, it will not be easy, even with the wisest and most humane rule, to restore self-confidence and self-respect to the oppressed and broken tribes of this region.

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[1] Darley, *op. cit.*, pp. 36–40. This book gives a dramatic and terrible account of the conditions in the south-west. Even if it may have been somewhat highly coloured, some of its main facts have been confirmed from the account given by Major Athill, who went with Darley upon an official boundary commission to Maji in 1919. See *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 56, no. 5, pp. 347–70.

[2] Hodson, *Where Lion Reign*, 1929, pp. 26–7.

[3] Cmd. 3217/1928, p. 18.

[4] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 605, n. 1.

[5] Cmd. 4668/1933, pp. 19–20.

[6] F. de Halpert was in these regions during 1935.

[7] See, in addition to Sudan annual reports, those of the Kenya Native Affairs Department, especially for 1935.

[8] See above, p. 130. Also Sandford, pp. 60–1.

THE SOMALIS

The Somali people cover the vast semi-desert horn of eastern Africa. Here the land rises from a burning coastal plain of varying width to a great plateau almost wholly deficient in permanent water, where the scanty rainfall produces thorn scrub and seasonal grass. Upon these the camels, sheep, and goats of the Somalis graze; their owners live upon them and maintain an ascetic nomadic life, their movements dictated by the growth of pasture and the existence of wells. For shelter they use skins stretched upon curved poles which are easily set up and carried on camels. This vast area of Somalia, as big as the whole of Ethiopia, carries only the scantiest population. It has never been accurately counted, but it probably amounts to some 1,750,000, of which about 350,000 live in the British sphere, and about 400,000 in the Ethiopian, while the other 1,000,000 live mainly in Italian, with a very few in French Somaliland.

Political unity could hardly be expected of people living under these physical circumstances. They are divided into many tribes and clans, and these in turn into patriarchal families. In the fierce struggle over inadequate resources there is much friction between the different groups, and the international frontiers which ignore the necessary movements of the tribes in search of water and pasture have created new difficulties. Conflicts lead to long-standing feuds between tribes and to a very elaborate system of collective action and of compensation for injuries.

The Somalis are Mohammedan and hold their religion with a fierce intolerance often found among the more backward and isolated converts to this religion. The mullahs exercise a strongly conservative influence, and suspicions of any educational innovations have held up advances in the British sphere. The precariousness of life has also bred in the Somalis what seems to others a tenacious and avaricious attitude; they are excitable, vain and superbly confident of their own importance and of their superiority to their neighbours. To trek across their hard country with a Somali escort is, however, to learn admiration for their endurance, cheerfulness, and dignity. As soldiers or servants they are capable of great devotion to the foreigner who can win their respect and affection, but their excitability has often led them into murderous attacks which have earned them a reputation for treachery and unreliability. A Eurafrican, Hamitic-speaking people, in appearance they are spare and upright, and their best and purest types can show high foreheads, long wavy hair, well-formed aquiline noses and thin lips, and, in general, an appearance that would be accounted handsome by European standards. They are remarkably clean in person and clothes. Their women, in youth, are very beautiful, but age quickly under the hard conditions of their lives.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

In addition to their being broken up into clan and tribal groups, there are other and larger divisions. Those who claim descent from Arab forefathers consider themselves a superior race and in Ethiopia these are called Asha, and are again divided into the Darod and Ishaak sections. Below them come the inferior Somali groups, and below them again the outcast people who stand in a servile relationship and who provide the metal-workers.

In Ethiopian Somaliland ten main tribes have been distinguished, the most important being the Ogaden, a tribe of the Darod section, said to be able to muster 45,000 fighting men.[1] Their name is often loosely applied to the whole of Ethiopian Somaliland. Generally speaking it may be said that the northern Somalis despise their brethren in the south, and that as the traveller moves down into the region of the river valley of the Webbe Shibeli, which flows from Bale province across Ethiopian Somaliland and into the sea at Mogadishu, the Somali type becomes less pure.

The Somalis in what is now Ethiopian Somaliland had, with the other northern Somalis, formerly been part of the Muslim kingdoms which had warred so much with Ethiopia and, in later years, those sections within reach of Harar had probably been tributary to that emirate.[2] Harar had acted as a buffer state between the Ethiopians and the Somalis, but the Ethiopians, having, as we have seen, seized the city in 1887, pushed out a stockaded camp to the east at Jijiga. The Somalis, with their large herds, were attacked by parties sent out to raid for meat for the hungry garrison now established at Harar. The Ethiopians were at this time making heavy importations of firearms, and the Somalis, since the British held the coast and did not allow the importation of arms, were, for all their fierce bravery, helpless before the Ethiopian soldiers. In 1889 an Ethiopian expedition penetrated far to the south of Harar and stripped the country bare of stock and horses. By 1891 the Ethiopian parties had reached Imi on the Webbe Shibeli and could claim to have mastered the Somalis in the region that fell to them, but not to have occupied the country. The boundary with Britain was drawn on the map in 1897.

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[1] *Handbook*, pp. 54–5.

[2] Cerulli, *Studi Etiopici*, p. 40.

Major Swayne, who knew these people well both as friends and enemies, suggests that it was the sense of peril and of injury among the divided and mutually hostile sections of the Somalis that impelled them, after vain appeals to the British, to seek unity and leadership under the Mad Mullah.[1] His movement, however, took the common Muslim form of a religious revival combined with a *jihad* against the infidel and he fell fiercely not only upon the Ethiopians at Jijiga, who appear to have been regarded at first as the main enemy, but also upon those sections of his own people which had entered into relations with the British. The result was the long series of campaigns between 1901 and 1921. In the earlier of these campaigns the Ethiopians co-operated with the British in vain attempts to surround the elusive fanatic in the thirsty wastes of the Ogaden.[2] In 1921 the Mullah, a fugitive in Ethiopian Somaliland, died peacefully in his bed.[3]

Somaliland was carved up in such a way as to leave the great inland slice to Ethiopia, the coastal blocks being taken by Italy and Great Britain, and a small but commercially important piece by France. As a result of the East African campaign of 1940–1, after half a century of division, all but French Somaliland came under a single, if provisional and military, government.

The majority of the Somalis in the Ethiopian section, especially in the low, more desert areas, never came under effective Ethiopian administration. Their semi-nomadic pastoral life in their own wilderness is antagonistic to any control, and the Somalis, with their pride bordering on arrogance, and their fiercely warlike nature, were not easily subjected by the Amharas. The British Government has itself good reason to know the difficulties of exercising a full and constructive administration over Somali tribes and Britain herself once attempted to abandon the troublesome interior between 1909 and 1915. Fanatical in religion and independent by circumstances the Somali hates his neighbours, the Amharas and the Gallas, and has added reason to hate those who endeavour to rule him. For the Gallas he has generally contempt as well as hatred, and when left to themselves the Somalis will generally push the Gallas out and appropriate the excellent wells which the Gallas make. The Ethiopians detest the Somali country which contrasts sharply with their cool native mountains. There was little in this barren waste to induce them to brave its hardships and the Somalis themselves added discouragements especially after they, too, began to acquire firearms. Numerous examples given by travellers of Ethiopians' detestation of the country could be quoted and of the effects of its climate upon the health and spirits of the highlanders. It was a country, they said, for the Somalis, the infidel, and the hyenas, not for the Christian.[1]

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[1] Swayne, H. G. C., *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland*, 3rd edition, 1903, pp. vii–viii.

[2] For these campaigns see Jardine, D., *The Mad Mullah of Somaliland*, 1923; also Jennings, J., and Addison, C., *With the Abyssinians in Somaliland*, 1905. For a popular account of the Somalis see Rayne, H., *Sun, Sand and Somals*, 1921.

[3] The writer, who was at that time trekking along the Ethiopian border with Major Rayne, was the first to hear news of his death from some wandering Somalis.

Economically Somaliland is a liability. It could not even offer the Ethiopians slaves to take away or *gabars* to cultivate for their masters. The export trade of stock and skins is scanty and the lack of internal trade and industry meant that there was insufficient revenue to cover the expenditure for administration even upon the basis of care and maintenance, which, until very recent years, was the policy in the British sphere. Because of this the administration of British Somaliland has been subsidized up to the present time by annual grants-in-aid from the British treasury. Clearly Ethiopia had no surplus revenue from which to finance the administration, still less the development and welfare, of such an unrewarding territory.

It is therefore not surprising that reports from Ethiopia and from British frontier authorities were that administration was mainly conspicuous by its absence, though it could also be said that, perhaps as a result, the Ethiopian authorities never gave the British the trouble over pastoral movements that arose with the Italians. Sovereignty was expressed chiefly by means of intermittent expeditions, not far removed from raids, in which stock was taken as tribute from the more accessible groups, who thereupon raided their nearest Somali enemies in order to recoup their losses. It need hardly be said that there was little security in Ethiopian Somaliland, and in 1927 a band of Ethiopian soldiers attacked the British ex-governor of Somaliland, and his Somali attendants, when he was at Dagah Bur on a hunting expedition, murdering eight of his men and looting the caravan. Protests by the British Government met with little response from Haile Selassié, then Regent, who replied that he had not sufficient arms to keep these people in order.

The Ogaden Somalis extended into the south of Bale province, and some of these went over the frontier into Italian territory to avoid Ethiopian taxation and administration. They had reason to regret this move when they found themselves conscripted to work on the Italian roads. Kenya official reports bear witness to the disorders of the frontier between the northern province and the Somali regions of the Ethiopian Borana province. While it is fair to say that some of this trouble was due to the age-old conflicts in country little administered on either side of the border, the negotiations with the Ethiopians showed, as so often in all these border questions, how little power or will they had to make or to keep a reasonable arrangement.

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[1] Jennings and Addison, *op. cit.*, pp. 150 and 167.

The story of the first clashes with Italy throws some light upon conditions and administration in this region. From about 1930 it appears that the Italians began to subsidize Somali irregulars to fan out from the borders of Italian Somaliland and to occupy the wells upon which all life in these regions depended. Some of the wells they occupied lay from 100 to 200 miles up from the undemarcated frontier and among them was the famous Wal-Wal. This situation led the Emperor, in 1931, to send some 15,000 troops to police this immense and desiccated area. This move, according to Mr. Steer, marked the deepest penetration of the Ogaden bush by the Ethiopians. The outposts which this army left behind them appear to have represented the first attempt to establish any occupying forces in the vast southern reaches of these unpopular lowlands.[1]

These posts were made near the position which the Italians had taken up at Moustahil and at Gabridihari farther north; troops were also stationed at Dagah Bur, where Steer found a garrison church and the telephone in 1935. All the south-east triangle, in which lay the valuable grazing grounds around Wal-Wal, seems to have been left unoccupied. The newly penetrated region was put under the control of the governor of Jijiga. In 1934, when the Italians strengthened their hold upon Wal-Wal, the Ethiopians took the neighbouring Gerlogubi water-holes, and as a result the Ethiopian Government could be said to have occupied the Ogaden, though hardly to be administering it. At the end of December the Italians attacked Ethiopians near Wal-Wal and thus in a struggle between a handful of men in this remote, neglected, and worthless wilderness, the war between Italy and Ethiopia began.

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[1] See his *Caesar in Abyssinia*, pp. 1–19, 75–119, 339–55, for a vivid description of the desolate country in this region and of the heroic resistance put up by Ethiopian forces here to the Italian invasion.

THE DANAKIL[1]

As with the Somali districts, so with the Danakil, there is little to be done except to give the reasons why these parts were all but unadministered.

The Danakil country lies to the north of those arid Muslim regions that, fitly shaped like a crescent, run from Eritrea to Borana to cut the Ethiopian plateau off from the sea-coasts. It runs from the base of the Gulf of Zula in Eritrea in a wide coastal margin to the Gulf of Tajura and the Awash rift; its eastward boundary is the Red Sea; westward is the steep scarp peopled by Gallas which marks the edge of the Ethiopian highlands. The margin is divided by the international frontier with Italy which runs down its length, leaving the more hilly coastal half to the Italians. There are 20,000 of the Danakil or—as they call themselves—Afar groups in Eritrea and it is estimated that there are rather less within the Ethiopian frontiers.

In this repellent region the rainfall of Ethiopia is at its lowest and the temperature at its hottest. As with Somaliland there was nothing to tempt the Ethiopians to leave their plateau and come down into this country of sand and thorn-scrub. The people were as hostile as their own physical setting to all intrusion or development. They speak their own language and are of the same Hamitic branch as the Somalis. The original people, their later reinforcements, and the major influences playing upon them came from Arabia. They are split into some thirty clans and are further divided into the ruling caste (the Assaimara, or 'red' men), and the servile caste (the Adoimara, or 'white' men),[2] though in Italian eyes, at least, they were all equally black. The 'red' men predominate in the south and the 'white' in the north, but there is no clear-cut division and some clans are mixed.[3] They are fierce but ignorant Muslims among whom sorcery has much influence. They live by their herds, camels, cattle, and goats, but from ancient times they have traded with the Ethiopians in salt from the pans in the torrid depressions to the north. The earliest travellers found this trade fully established and it made for an economic link cutting across the religious and geographical separation.

The way of life in this region is very similar to that of the Somalis. The dominant characteristic of the Danakil tribes, at least in the eyes of their neighbours, is their fierce hostility to strangers, an attitude which must be induced by their harsh struggle for life and their remoteness from civilizing contacts. Their records show that murder was an honourable as well as a profitable act and men strove to collect and to flaunt the trophies of killing. Though few white men have done more than pass quickly from west to east along recognized routes, the territory has a long list of murders and massacres to its discredit.

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[1] The name of the people is Danakil. They call themselves Afar.

[2] *Races and Tribes of Eritrea*, British Military Administration, Asmara 1943, p. 23.

[3] *Guida*, p. 331.

There is no political unity in the country, but the Danakil groups appear to be drawn together by their common language, religion, and way of life and their common hatred of intruders, especially of their ancient enemies, the Ethiopians, who tried from time to time to exercise sovereignty, at least upon the neighbouring fringes of the plains. In so far as there was superiority and leadership, it resided in the Sultanate of Aussa, which lay to the south, out of reach of raiders from the plateau. Here, where the Awash finally abandons its attempt to reach the sea, there was some cultivation and even civilization and fine herds of cattle, so that the hungry, prowling tribesmen further north looked upon Aussa as an earthly paradise.[1]

The history of the country is fragmentary. The southern part came into the medieval kingdom of Adel, Muslim and fiercely hostile to Christian Ethiopia. The rulers of this country tried to claim the lowlanders for subjects, but though it seems that tribute was paid at times in recognition of the greater power of the neighbours, the physical conditions have hitherto always prevented that power being made effective. The earliest European traveller to leave us an account of the interior of the country was Don Alfonso Mendez who went to Ethiopia in 1625 as a missionary, and who, warned by the Ethiopians not to attempt entry by Massawa or Suakin, landed in the kingdom of Dancalia. Letters to the Don from Ethiopia told him that the King of Dancalia 'is a very good Neighbour, and almost subject to the Emperor'. The qualification was apt, since it was necessary for the Emperor to send the king rich gifts in order to ensure a good reception for his guests.[2] Ludolphus records that the King of Dancalia was 'a firm Ally, but obliged to no sort of Tribute'.[3] The travellers left a vivid impression of their horror of the country—the journey on camels; the great heat; the briers and the stinking, brackish water. Lobo has left another telling account of the hatefulness of this country, 'of horrid deserts destitute of water, or containing only that which was foul, nauseous and offensive, a region scarce passable and full of serpents'.[4] His and other later evidence shows that the Sultan of Aussa, who, as we have seen, was by no means the ruler of all the tribe, was more an ally and commercial associate of the Emperor than a subject.[1]

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[1] Nesbitt, L. M., *Desert and Forest*, 1934, pp. 243–61.

[2] Tellez, pp. 224–7.

[3] Ludolphus, p. 234.

[4] Lobo, *op cit.* pp. 28 ff.

In 1895 the Sultan of Aussa, Mohammed Anfar, wiped out an expedition sent by the Egyptians under Munzinger, thus very probably neutralizing part of Menelik's plan of encouraging Egyptian attacks upon the Emperor John.[2] In the years following the event, the Danakil people murdered successively the following explorers: Arnoux in 1880, Giuleth in 1881, Bianchi in 1884, and Barral in 1886.[3] How little the Sultan thought himself Menelik's subject is shown by his making separate treaties with the Italians in 1883 and 1888. The latter treaty, by which the Sultan received a subsidy from Italy, was not even communicated to Menelik.[4] In 1894 the Italians tried to make trouble on the Emperor's flank by sending agents to work upon the religious antagonism of the Danakil and Galla Muslims towards the Ethiopians. Menelik was obliged at the end of 1895 to send an army of 30,000 men to deal with the Danakil menace just as he was marching north to face the Italians in Tigré.

Trouble in this region is recorded again in the time of Menelik's successor. Lij Yasu, in reprisal for raids, led a punitive expedition into the Danakil borders, and having massacred the people in the wrong villages, returned wearing the special trophy of those who had accounted for people of this community.

The Danakil districts would be the last region to feel the effects of Haile Selassié's advent and we find that when the explorer Nesbitt planned his expedition through this country, he did so in the spirit of a man who might never return.[5] His book throws some light upon the degree of Amhara control in this area. He set out from Awash station on the railway, but he soon left Amhara administration behind. 'Although the Danakil country belongs to Abyssinia the agents of the government are unable to penetrate into its deserts, except at the fringes. The brave and ferocious Danakils are in a continual state of contention with the government forces for possession of the borderland lying between their tribal territories and the Plateau. In any given sector, sometimes the government and sometimes the Danakils hold the upper hand. Beyond the borderlands no government force ever dares to pass.' He describes how the Ethiopian agent at the border post, a brave and fearless man, hated the tribesmen and 'killed them on the slightest provocation'.[6] He visited the Sultan of Aussa, and reported that, remote from any control, he lived in independence and ruled despotically. Nesbitt had asked for no Ethiopian passport as none would have been of any use among those wild tribesmen. 'Had we presented a paper from Addis Ababa authorizing us in confident terms to travel within Aussa it is more than likely that the Aussan ruler would have taken offence at it, and denied us further passage through his dominions.'[1] He had the greatest difficulty in passing through the neighbouring Biru sultanate to the north.

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[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 398, n. 9.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 399, n. 8, and p. 400, n. 1 and ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 402, n. 2.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 403, n. 1 and 3.

[5] Nesbitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 68–9.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 94–5.

Since Nesbitt's journey in 1934, Mr. Wilfred Thesiger travelled through this country and visited the Sultan of Aussa who received him with lavish hospitality but kept his movements under strict control. Mr. Thesiger followed the Awash and solved the mystery of this river when he discovered the end of its course in Lake Abhebad on the border of French Somaliland.[2] 'The country', he writes, 'has never been effectually conquered by the Abyssinians, who are highlanders, unsuited by nature to operations in these hot and feverish lowlands.' He was only able to go about the country under the protection of the Sultan's silver baton, and he reported that this potentate ruled Aussa with an iron hand, keeping excellent order.[3] He confirmed the reputation of the people for ferocity, observing the thongs with which they decorated the sheaths of their knives, one for each victim, and the stones erected on men's graves, one for each killing. He describes how they were educated from their youth up to regard the taking of life as their great distinction, and were ready to admit that they would rip open a pregnant woman in order to mutilate the child inside her and obtain a trophy.

The Italians, hoping, as in 1894, to win over the Aussa and the Biru sultanates, sent Baron Franchetti to this country shortly before the invasion of 1935.[4] The building of the road to Assab by the Italians opened a way through the country for the first time, and, presumably, imposed upon the tribes near by, in face of their hatred of any intrusion, some degree of local order and economic influence.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 270.

[2] Thesiger, W., 'The Awash River and the Aussa Sultanate', *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 85, no. 1, pp. 1–23.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[4] See Franchetti, R., *Nella Dancalia Etiopica*, 1930. His evidence about Ethiopian administration has not been used here since at this date it would be of very doubtful impartiality.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE PROVINCES SINCE THE RESTORATION

THE GENERAL POSITION, 1941–2

It appeared to most observers of Ethiopia in 1941 that the Emperor was faced by an extremely grave task in the re-establishment of his authority and the enforcement of orderly government. Though patriot co-operation had shown that many of the people were ready for revolt it was still not quite clear whether the defeat and flight of the Emperor had affected adversely his position in the eyes of the peoples of his empire. The state of much of the country appeared to be chaotic: there were large numbers of masterless patriot bands; of deserters from the enemy; of fugitives from their homes, and of labourers who had lost their foreign employers; in addition to some 200,000 Italian prisoners, about 40,000 Italian civilians were in the country. The provinces were full of arms, and the destruction of roads and bridges had for the moment dislocated the new Italian system of communications. There were large British forces in the country; the fighting had still to be finally concluded in the south and at Gondar, and the world war had still to continue through some of its gravest moments for four more years. It was in these conditions that the British made plans through their military and political services to provide firm support to the newly liberated country, which, by international law, was conquered Italian territory. Something will be said in the next chapter of the difficulties which arose from the conflict of jurisdiction which added to the confusion.

In the event, the country was restored to order with surprising speed and ease. It is impossible to say whether in the first months of restoration the Emperor might have met with more resistance or rivalry to his power if he had not come back to his kingdom with the overwhelming support of the British Commonwealth armies and resources. There was, however, as we have already seen, no very effective competition for the throne, as the most serious possible rivals, those of the Emperor John's Tigré dynasty, had not done much to revive their fame during the wars. Yet, as we shall see, the only outburst of disorder that could be called a rebellion occurred in Tigré and was put down with British help.

Throughout most of the country very little trouble was encountered in restoring the old provincial administration, such as it was. The Italian system had not had time to affect the people's minds and habits very deeply; in many parts their control had not extended much beyond the roads and the government posts. Gojjam had proved especially resistant, and even in Shoa the patriot leader, Ababa Aregai, had held out to the last in the mountains. Under the rule of the Duke d'Aosta with his proclaimed policy of 'clemency and attraction', administrative methods had become milder, there had been large releases of political prisoners, and greater recognition on the lower levels of local leaders and institutions.

Enough has been said to show that Ethiopian methods of administration differed very much from those employed by the British in Africa, and some of the British political officers who were stationed in the provinces as these were one by one reconquered, were shocked at the rough and ready methods of governors returning with their followers to take over the areas allotted to them. There was, without doubt, a good deal of unrest and some harshness in the re-establishment of the old authorities. Order was, however, restored to a reasonable level more quickly than most foreigners expected. The outbreak of brigandage that inevitably marked the end of the war proved a nuisance rather than a danger. A Proclamation issued in March 1942[1] admitted that 'the security of Our People is much disturbed by reason of the prevalence of armed robberies and other acts of violence' and revised the penal code by instituting the death penalty for robbery in arms. Yet although there were robberies and murders from time to time even on the main north road, there were Europeans who travelled freely unescorted and unarmed. Above all, the Ethiopians, guided by the humane exhortations of the Emperor, rebuked the fears of those (of whom the writer was one) who, remembering the aggression and the atrocities the Ethiopians had suffered, anticipated the possibility that in the first flush of resurgence there might be some reprisals upon the scattered Italians. By an immense and efficiently conducted operation the British military administration succeeded during 1942 in collecting and evacuating by sea some 50,000 Italians.[1]

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[1] A Proclamation to Provide for the Imposition of the Death Sentence in the case of armed robberies, No. 3 of 1942.

The Emperor showed the strongest repugnance to the British proposal that the political officers who had come in with the military should be posted in the newly liberated provinces as advisers to the returning Ethiopian governors. Some thirty or forty of these were actually sent into the provinces. For a period it seemed that an awkward clash of authority might result from the diffusion of members of the British political mission, but as it appeared that the Emperor was not only determined, but was also able, to establish his rule throughout the country, the officials were withdrawn. Apart from the great indirect influence of the presence of considerable military forces, the only direct British influence upon the process of reconstructing the provincial administration was represented by the advisers and especially, in the early stages, by Brigadier Sandford who acted as adviser to the Ministry of the Interior in the early period of the liberation.

One of the first tasks of the restored government was to redraw the provincial boundaries. A comparison of the two maps, 1 and 2, will show readers how the Italians simplified their administration of the horn of Africa by throwing their new conquest in with their old and turning these territories into five large provinces which, in part, ignored the old boundaries. The names of these with their populations have been given.[2] The Italian arrangement is interesting. They once more made a unity of the old Tigré province, which their earlier conquest had partitioned, and, indeed, extended it to the south-east. The ancient regional name of Amhara was revived to make a large province covering the old Gojjam and Bagemdir. Shoa, doubtless for political reasons, disappeared as a provincial name and the area was mostly covered by a central area called after the capital. Italian and Ethiopian Somaliland were put together with Harar to make a huge, almost entirely Muslim block to the south-east. The negro, Galla, and Sidamo groups of the south-west were combined to make a mixed group under the name Galla-Sidamo, with the capital in Muslim Jimma.

The five capitals of these large provinces, reached by all-weather roads, were endowed with streets of shops, public buildings, churches, mosques, and large residential suburbs for the Italian officials.

In erasing the Italian boundaries, the Ethiopian governors did not attempt to return exactly to the old provinces and districts, with their rather heterogeneous size and historical character, but established twelve new provinces in addition to the district containing the capital. The boundaries of these, while to some extent respecting the traditional shape of the more ancient and important provinces in the north, grouped the many small conquered communities of the south into large units of mixed race. Thus the new Kaffa (sometimes called Jimma) province threw the old Muslim Galla principality in with the Sidamo Kaffa and the negro districts round Maji, while a huge southern province, Sidamo-Borana, embraced, as its name shows, groups which differed widely not only in their culture but in the physical conditions of their lives. The last vestige of the old province of Amhara disappeared. Some of the old small provinces, however, re-appeared as the districts into which the new large units were sub-divided. There are sixty-four of these sub-provinces (*wereda*), divided into 321 districts and 1,221 sub-districts.[1]

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[1] Cmd. 6589/1945, p. 11.

[2] See above, p. 264.

One of the most striking changes was the great extension of Wallo province and of the Emperor's old fief of Harar. These were put under the Emperor's two elder sons. Harar, indeed, according to the map, runs for more than 600 miles north and south from the Danakil country to Italian Somaliland, and not much less from east to west, taking in not only the Ogaden but also the more fertile region of the old Bale province. Thus, if ever the bad old days should come again, the present dynasty would be in direct control of the capital, the railway, and an immense block of eastern Ethiopia.

THE DECREE OF 1942

In the *Gazette* of the 27th of August 1942, a decree[2] was issued by the Emperor under article 11 of the constitution. It is interesting to observe that a measure of such great constitutional importance could be treated as a matter for administrative regulations rather than for statutory law.

According to the decree the Emperor was to appoint, upon the recommendation of the Minister of the Interior, one governor-general for each province. His responsibility was defined as follows:

> 'The Governor-General is the Government representative for the Province to which he is appointed. Governors shall exercise general supervision over all officials appointed in their Province by the Ministry of the Interior and other Ministries. But they are responsible to the Ministers of Finance, Justice, Agriculture, and other Ministers according to the nature of the business. On matters directly affecting a particular Minister, Governors shall communicate directly with that Minister. On matters of direct concern to a particular Minister but also affecting general administrative policy they will consult with the Minister of the

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[1] *New Times*, 21 September 1946.

[2] Administrative Regulations, Decree No. 1 of 1942.

Interior. They will pass copies of all correspondence with other Ministers to the Minster of the Interior.'

These directions run completely counter to the old traditions by which strong governors were masters of their own provinces and all governors could feel that their responsibility, so far as it existed, was to the Emperor alone and not to ministers. Traditions so deeply rooted are not abolished over-night by regulation, at least for those men brought up in the old order and having in addition some local status. The movement, however, which had already begun before the conquest, is in the direction of making a type of governor-general whose status is derived wholly from the Emperor, and the device of very frequent transfers has again been used to discourage still further the development of over-mighty subjects.

It is next laid down that governors-general shall reside in the appointed headquarters of the province. This would seem an obvious instruction but in Ethiopia, as we have seen, governors spent a great deal of their time in the capital, either because the Emperor wished to keep an eye upon them or because they and their wives and immediate entourage preferred the amenities of headquarters. The first reason for absenteeism still obtained; although in May, shortly before the issue of this decree, the Emperor had appointed Ras Seyum governor-general of Tigré, he was kept continuously under surveillance in Addis Ababa. It is also reported that other governors are still frequently spending a great deal of their time waiting about the Emperor's court.

The next two clauses further limit the old autonomy of the governor-general in his province. It is laid down that he must give orders according to instructions issued by the Ministry of the Interior to the Directors, Governors, *Mislanés* (sub-governors) and lower officials and must transact all public business through their intermediary. The duties of these officials are defined later in the decree but it will be clearer if we note their position at this point.

The directorship is a most interesting appointment. In article 3 it is laid down that the director shall be appointed by the Emperor to assist the governor-general in his work. He is to supervise, under his chief, the expenditure of the funds legally provided for the province, transmitting moneys to the officials concerned and forwarding the accounts to the Ministry of Finance. It is clear, though this does not, of course, appear in the decree, that the director was often to play a similar part to the directors-general of the ministries, that of the younger, educated efficient officers directly dependent upon the Emperor's favour and supplying the deficiencies in ability and, in some cases, of docility, of the great men whom it was sometimes necessary to appoint to the highest offices. Even where one of the 'new' men is appointed to be governor-general, the director will act as a very effective check upon his power.

Below the director comes the 'Officer of the Principal Secretariat' whose duties as archivist and chief secretary are obvious, though in the present state of Ethiopian education this office and those subordinate to it cannot be easy to fill.

The province is divided into districts over each of which is a governor appointed by the Emperor; this officer is responsible to the governor-general for the administration of the district. He is provided with police; he is ordered to inspect all his district twice a year and to forward a monthly report to the governor-general. He, too, is provided with a 'Principal Secretary', and *Mislanés* and the 'officers of municipalities' work under him. The *Mislanés* are the executive officers for the sub-districts and in their turn must furnish monthly reports to the governor and make biennial inspections of their areas. It is interesting to remark that there is practically no official recognition of any representative or democratic form of local government in the sub-districts: the council here, which is to meet three times a year, is to be comprised of the governor as chairman, his principal secretary, his legal officer, the officers of the municipalities, the *Mislanés*, the officials of the various ministries who may be stationed there and 'not more than two local elders'. The duties of this council are not given.

Turning back to the regulations about the province as a whole we find that no taxes or dues may be collected that are not legally instituted by the central government and that neither the governor-general nor his subordinates may accept the customary gifts which the people used to present to officials on tour. The governor-general is to decide matters of dispute between officials and, in more difficult cases, must call a commission consisting of himself, the director, the principal secretary, and governor, and the officials of the various ministries who shall decide the question by majority vote and submit their decision to the confirmation of the Minister of the Interior.

As in the districts, so in the province as a whole, there is to be a council meeting three times a year 'to discuss and advise on matters relating to the welfare of the inhabitants and the prosperity of the Province'. (Article 2, part 23.) It is to be composed of all the senior provincial and departmental officials, including the chief of police, and it is thus to be, according to the law, an entirely bureaucratic body.

Another clause (article 1, part 20) forbids governors-general or their subordinates to sign treaties or negotiate with their opposite numbers across the border in matters affecting the boundary or political or military matters. 'He can only carry on his official duty of administering his Province in good agreement with those authorities. It is the particular duty of a Governor-General or of officials under him to safeguard with care the continuance of friendly relations existing with the foreign Governments of territories bordering on the territories of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia.' In view of the extensive and difficult frontiers which Ethiopia shares with her neighbours under British rule and the vexed diplomatic contacts to which they have given rise, this clause is of special interest. There can be little doubt that friendly relations would more easily be achieved if the frontier officials were given, or dared to take, more discretionary powers to settle matters with their British colleagues without prolonged and wearisome reference to Addis Ababa.

One thing stands out above all others in this decree. It aims at the final destruction of the old provincial government, sweeping away all that most European observers describe, not quite exactly, as feudal in the former position of the rulers of the provinces. This process had, as we have seen, begun many years earlier and was carried a long way in much of Ethiopia in the first part of Haile Selassié's reign. But here for the first time, by full legal definition, nearly all the attributes of power possessed by the provincial ruler through almost the whole of Ethiopian history are shorn away. We have seen already in the chapter on the army that he has lost his private army; he now loses his right to appoint his own hierarchy of provincial officials or to recruit his own police. His control of provincial tribute is taken from him and instead he becomes, in effect, the chief accountant for the government. He is to be assisted, which means that he will be watched and checked, by other important officials appointed by the Emperor and responsible to their several ministers at the capital. He and all these officers are to be attached directly to Addis Ababa by the payment of their salaries from the central treasury.

Another feature of this scheme of government will strike all those who are interested in African administration. It is the absence, with an exception to be noted later, of any trace of the principles generally described as indirect rule, or even of any local self-government. Had a situation arisen which had given Britain the responsibility for devising a system for this country, it would undoubtedly have provided most carefully for the recognition within a common framework of many kinds and sizes of local communities. There would have been considerable study of the varieties of social institution presented by Amhara, Sidamo, negro, or Somali provinces and there would have been many consultations with the groups to obtain their views upon the forms and the persons to be recognized. The Ethiopian decree appears to aim at immediate bureaucratic concentration and at a complete uniformity which ignores the wide differences between the provinces and the peoples. It may be of interest to record that some years ago, before the Italian conquest, an Ethiopian student was sent to Europe to make a study of the methods followed in Africa by the several European powers. In a discussion with the writer, he made it clear that his report would be strongly in favour of the French policy of assimilation, rather than the British one of 'indirect rule'.

A possible reply to the comments in the last paragraph is that the decree provides only for the upper layer of administration, and that this will be linked with the lower customary strata of kindred groups, *shums*, and community leaders that we have already reviewed. That may be; indeed, to some extent, it must be, at least for a period. But there is no hint of this in the legislation; there is no reference to the *chiqa-shum*, to locally elected or selected councils or chiefs. The effect of the decree, as it becomes fully effective, must be to sap initiative and responsibility from local institutions and leaders and to provide it mainly from above. The parliament is unlikely to provide much check upon this or to afford for many years much expression to local sentiments or particularities, especially for the more backward regions. Whatever modifications provincial realities may force upon the government, the drive towards rapid centralization and uniformity is apparent in this decree as in so much of the Emperor's policy.

This question of the immediate practicability of this decree needs further consideration. Can it be assumed, for a country in Ethiopia's stage of development, that such a fundamental and comprehensive reform has actually been implemented? No well-founded answer can be given. Of the foreign observers who have been in Ethiopia since the restoration very few have had much opportunity of studying conditions outside some of the larger provincial centres. Even where they have had the opportunity, they appear to have found very great difficulty in forming a clear idea of the nature and working of the administration. From such information as it has been possible to collect from a large amount of written and verbal evidence, the following tentative picture can be given.

The new provincial system has not, as some sceptics anticipated, been a dead letter. Thanks to his almost unquestioned status, his military strength, the Italian roads, the extending telephone system, and perhaps to psychological and political merits of his rule which it is difficult for a European to assess from an Ethiopian standpoint, the Emperor appears to have succeeded in imposing his new centralized administrative machine upon the country as a whole. Travellers even in quite remote parts have found the new provincial headquarters established and the officials listed in the decree at their posts. This might have been expected in such places as Jimma, Harar, Dessie, and Gondar, where the surviving Italian buildings have provided a most valuable setting, but it seems that even in a relatively remote and formerly semi-autonomous province such as Wallaga, the main structure at least of the new administration has been set up and is working.

This much having been said, some warnings and qualifications must follow. Firstly it must be remembered that most of the evidence comes from the accessible and semi-civilized provincial capitals. Just as in the twenties and thirties the façade of central ministries existed in Addis Ababa with very little extension into the provinces, so now there is likely to be a period, in which the provincial headquarters are being elaborated, before their operations radiate effectively into the vast roadless and mountainous regions which lie between the main centres and the main routes. There is no denigration in this assumption nor in the other that, with the initial lack of staff trained in clerical technique and in the habits of orderly modern administration, the immense new task of reporting, of writing and copying by hand in Amharic, of accounting and of departmental co-ordination cannot be implemented in the full terms of the decree. Further—and this a matter of knowledge not of assumption—it was almost unavoidable that the sudden dispatch into the provinces of the new agents of several newly constituted ministries should lead to confusion and overlapping of functions both between each other and between them and the governor-general's staff. There was, as we have seen in the chapter upon finance, some difficulty between the agents of the Ministries of Finance and Agriculture over taxation in the provinces. The story is told that when appeal was made in Jimma to instructions from Addis Ababa, the director-general replied, 'Oh, yes, there's a government in Addis Ababa; we here in Jimma are another government'.

There was the further difficulty of implementing the new policy of paying all salaries from the central treasury, which was perhaps the reform most calculated to destroy the old financial system and which for that very reason was a difficult new administrative habit to inculcate centrally and, even more, locally. It is certain that in 1943 the salaries of all provincial officers were in arrears and it is difficult not to believe that these unpaid men paid themselves by the methods that had been legitimate during the centuries before 1935. There can be no doubt, however, that the central government will do anything in its power to make a reality of a reform upon which its control of the provinces depends; and the apparently healthy revenues since 1944 may have made this more possible. But this is hardly a matter upon which the outside observer can expect to find facts or figures.

Before leaving this general aspect of the new provincial administration we may notice that it comes under the Ministry of the Interior. This department is organized for its work, according to a 1946 statement issued by the government, in the following sections: directorates-general of provincial administration, public security, lands and survey, and labour; with departments for public health and for the central administration of the ministry. In this same recent statement, the government reports that the ministry has engaged a number of foreign technicians and personnel. Thus, there are in the ministry a central administrative adviser, a police commissioner, and a medical director. Foreign instructors are employed for the police.[1]

The training and gradual extension of a largely centralized police force will be a powerful instrument in further undermining what is left of the tradition of the autonomy of the provincial governor.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Before leaving the decree of 1942 a few words should be added about its municipal clauses (article 9, parts 71–7). These lay down that the ancient title of *kantiba*, which is analogous to that of mayor, should be held only in the capital and in Gondar though it appears that the title has since been extended. The capital is to be directly under the Minister of the Interior; the officers to be appointed to other towns are to be under their governors-general. In these clauses we find the first clear recognition of local self-government. Where a municipal council is set up, it is to consist of the representatives of the central ministries with 'seven Ethiopian residents elected yearly from amongst property owners and principal merchants and known by their works and good conduct'. Then, in rather ambiguous terms, the decree continues: 'Election is made after the elders of the town or city have been consulted.' The powers of the council are limited to the following: order and hygiene; registration of urban property, births, marriages, and deaths; maintenance of urban roads, lighting, and water-supply; issue of local licences, traffic regulations, and a few other minor duties. The *kantiba* or officer is to command, through his own officers, the police allotted to the town. Taxes are to be fixed by the municipal council and approved by the governor-general; they are to be expended on behalf of the town.

Three years later the Municipalities Proclamation (no. 74 of 1945) enlarged upon the decree. It was now laid down that the seven resident members should be elected by the owners of immovable property at a general meeting. The powers were slightly extended and were more fully defined with regard to town planning and municipal services, while some welfare functions were added, including health and hygiene not otherwise provided for by the medical department. The councils may draw up regulations subject to the approval of the Minister of the Interior. The *kantiba* or officer appointed by the government shall be vested with the control, management, and good government of municipalities. The council will decide the rates. These are to be fixed upon immovable property; there is also to be a water rate, and a number of local licences and fees make up the revenue. Categories are established consisting of Schedule 'A', municipalities, and of Schedule 'B', which has sub-divisions into townships of three classes. It is not clear from the law what is the administrative significance of these categories. In Schedule 'A' are listed Addis Ababa, Gondar, Harar, Jimma, Dessie, and Diredawa. In 'B' there are listed a hundred townships divided fairly evenly into classes 1, 2, and 3. This hundred, by tropical African standards, seems a very large number to be selected as townships and some of these must be little more than villages. If so, and if the councils are established and any scope given to the elected members, these little townships may, as so often in social history, be a means of injecting the beginnings of modern progress and democracy into the provinces. It is difficult to understand how the central ministries will be able to maintain paid and trained staff in over a hundred municipalities.

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[1] *New Times*, 21 September 1946.

It is reported that the capital is setting a very good example, and that the elections there arouse the interest of the ratepayers and that the councillors, including the older men, show a shrewd grasp of their civic affairs.

A very interesting report of proceedings appeared in the local press during 1946.[1] This gave a picture of the Committee of the Municipality deciding to spend $30,000 upon a guest-house, $22,000 upon the repair of the slaughter-house, a matter which was first discussed with the medical department and then investigated by Brigadier Sandford (the Municipality's Director-General), and other committee members. There was also a good deal of discussion of the machinery to be set up to deal with the expected report of Sir Patrick Abercrombie upon a new town plan for the capital. Finally, while waiting for the taxes to be collected, the committee arranged for an advance of $1,000,000 from the State Bank. It would appear from this report, and not least from its publication in the press, that municipal government has made a real start at the capital.

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[1] *Herald*, 8 April 1946.

LAND TENURE

An attempt was made in the earlier chapters upon the provinces to put together from scanty materials some picture of the position with regard to land tenure and its obligations as the basis of the system of provincial administration. The advent of Italian rule struck a blow at the whole system, particularly at the provincial structure in its upper layers, and weakened the old foundation of the system, the position of the *gabars*. Returning landlords are said to have found it difficult to reassert their hold on their *gabars*, many of whom had tasted the relative freedom of working for wages under the Italians.

The situation with regard to land tenure is, perhaps, the most difficult problem which confronts the Ethiopian Government and it will take many years of patient work before a uniform and equitable system can be devised or at least imposed. The main needs seem to be fixity of tenure and of rent for the cultivator as against the landlord. There is also, in some parts, the problem of large and often little-cultivated estates which might well be broken up. The European conception of individual ownership is gaining ground here as elsewhere in Africa and must have been greatly strengthened by the Italian régime. The interests of the government are in the direction of sweeping away all the old immunities from taxation, giving land-holders fixity of tenure in return for the loss of their special privileges. This is all part of the transformation which the modern state everywhere requires, as it breaks out of its primitive and customary bonds, and as the relations between its subjects pass from status to contract. The status of the *gabar* is the central, or rather the fundamental, part of the complex structure now in process of rapid change. It is possible to point to some measures which indicate the policy of the central government in this matter, even though it may not yet be fully implemented in the provinces.

In the first place it is implicit in some of the new laws that the main features of the old system are abolished. This should be the obvious result of the decree upon provincial administration which, by setting up a bureaucracy appointed and paid by the central government, removes any legal basis for the old methods by which officials, great and small, lived off the land and its peasants. Similarly the new army proclamation[1] by which the regular armed forces are to be paid should do away with another heavy burden laid upon the *gabar*. It is, however, reported that all the troops do not in fact receive regular pay and it is uncertain how far the law applies to the 'territorials' outside the new 'regular' army. The Land Tax Proclamation,[1] which has already been discussed as a measure of public finance,[2] has an importance in this context. In laying down the fixed tax and tithe upon all land the proclamation lays down that 'any other taxes, services and fees heretofore payable are hereby repealed, and the taxes hereafter specified are substituted'. This sweeping provision, in so far as it can be implemented, reinforced the effect of Decree 1 of 1942[3] in that no dues can legally be demanded any more in return for public services; it does not affect dues liable in lieu of rent. The two, as has been seen, are not always easy to distinguish. It is difficult to say what is the actual position in Ethiopia to-day with regard to the payment of rent by the old tribute and services. The greatly increased use of currency must have affected the position even apart from any regulations.

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[1] A Proclamation to Provide for the Establishment and Government of a Force Styled the Imperial Army, No. 68 of 1944.

It seems as though the Emperor had intended a more direct attack upon the *gabar* system than these measures represent. A statement issued by the Ethiopian Government in 1941 announced not only that the legal status of slavery would be abolished but that 'the reform of the "Gabar" system or serfdom will go hand in hand with the slavery reforms, but in this case there is less need to go slowly'. The Emperor had announced in a speech to parliament as early as the year 1934 that he intended to abolish the system. He judged that the moment had now arrived for him to do so: 'In future soldiers and employees of the Government will receive pay and rations only and a decree abolishing the "Gabar" will be enacted shortly.'[4]

There is no doubt that the improvement in communications, the overthrow by the Italians of many of the feudal lords, and the falling into abeyance of many of the old customs, such as the giving of frequent feasts to the soldiery, have contributed to the lessening of the need for many of the services rendered by slaves and *gabars*. A great many of the former slave and *gabar* owners have in the last five years lost their slaves and *gabars* and the urge to regain possession of them has not been so great as might have been expected.

We may notice in passing that in the execution of the new taxation policy there still seems to be little popular agency. The regulations issued under the Land Proclamation of 1944 lay down that the commission for classifying the land according to fertility shall consist of the chief *Mislané* representing the Ministry of the Interior, another official for the Ministry of Finance, and another for that of Justice, the *Malkanya*, and one elder of the locality selected by the governor. Appeal from this body is to another commission entirely composed of government officials.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, no. 70 of 1944.

[2] See above, pp. 209–212.

[3] Administrative Regulations, *op. cit.*

[4] *New Times*, 20 September 1941.

It has been necessary to write so far in very general terms as if the provinces were as uniform as the new laws suggest. That there is still, however, little uniformity amongst the provinces is shown by such regional information as can be obtained about their conditions since 1935.

It will be clear from all that has been said that the northern and the southern provinces present very different administrative problems to the Emperor. In the Amharic and Tigrean north the most serious difficulties that could arise would be political; they would for the most part be the issue of historical separatism or of rival dynasties taking advantage of any weakness of the present imperial line. In the south the conquered and divided subject peoples would be unlikely to offer any political difficulties of this kind: trouble in these regions might flare up locally against serious misgovernment or show itself in the disorders or mutual conflicts of the still imperfectly administered negro or nomadic groups.

TIGRÉ

Looking first at the north-east, we must consider the perpetual Ethiopian problem of Tigré, with its Tigrinya-speaking population, its links with the northern half of the ancient province, now in Eritrea, and its long record of separatism and rebellion which makes almost the main theme in Ethiopia's political history. When the Italians conquered the country, Ras Seyum, who bore the first brunt of the invasion, was loyal to the Emperor: he fought strongly with his own army, based in the mountainous Tembien. He had to see the famous fortress stronghold of Makale given away by the treacherous Haile Selassié Gugsa, his cousin, who was in touch with the untamed Wajerat, Raia, and Azebu Gallas of this region, ancestral *shiftas* whom the Italians could buy for a few dollars a head. According to Steer, when Seyum was forced to abandon his province all but a remnant of his Tigreans stayed behind and accepted Italian rule. When the Emperor left the country Seyum made terms with the conquerors: he was treated by them as the second Ethiopian in precedence—Ras Hailu coming first—and was sent back to Tigré. With the return of the Emperor, though provided with 3,000 rifles by the Italians, he resumed his old allegiance as soon as it was politic.[1]

As the British army swung south from its victory at Keren and the occupation of Asmara, it found in Ras Seyum the main leader of the north. Haile Selassié Gugsa was not handed over to the Emperor, whose moderation and justice might have been trusted, but was exiled to the Seychelles. The British military administration began by dealing with Ethiopian Tigré from Asmara as if it were part of Eritrea. This measure gave obvious grounds for offence to the Ethiopians and presumably aroused the Emperor's suspicions of Ras Seyum and of the possible revival of Tigrean separatism. Although, therefore, the name of the Ras heads the first list of governors-general gazetted on the 10th of May 1941,[1] it appears that he was not allowed to rule Tigré but was kept under some kind of house arrest and later of surveillance in Addis Ababa. He seems to have been treated with full personal respect, but the Emperor resisted all pressure for his return to his province.

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[1] Steer, *Sealed and Delivered*, pp. 179–81.

In the autumn of 1943 a serious revolt broke out in parts of Tigré. It had been brewing up during the summer, but as the Ethiopian Government kept the whole event then and since in considerable obscurity, it is not easy to assess it politically. Various suggestions have been made as to the causes of revolt. A student of Ethiopian history would read it as one more expression of the ancient dualism, a gesture of discontent on the part of Tigré against imperial control, especially as represented by the new centralizing policy wielded from Shoa with Shoan ministers and agents holding the key positions. According to one version of this view the revolt should be interpreted not as a desire on the part of Tigreans to break away from the empire but rather as a demand, especially among the *shums*, for further integration and a larger share of the attention of government and of the fruits of office. It was natural that Tigreans, remembering the glories of the past and the recent exploits of the northern rulers, Theodore and John, should resent the transfer of power to the south. Their sacred Aksum was the Westminster of Ethiopia, yet neither Menelik nor Haile Selassié had come there for crowning, and the latter, as far as the writer can learn, has never yet visited Tigré.

It is difficult to say how far the revolt constituted a call for the return of Ras Seyum or even a desire to assert the claim of his family to the imperial throne. Certainly his son Mangasha, who was in Tigré, and presumably resentful at his father's detention, is said to have flirted with the rebels but did not commit himself. The rebellion had considerable initial success. If the truculent Gallas of the Makale region had been fully raised against the government, the situation would have been more serious. The rebels blockaded the northern main road, attacked and stormed the important city and strong point of Makale and there was much fighting round Amba Alage. The Emperor sent up several battalions of his territorial army but their commissariat and munitions supply broke down completely. Some bloody fighting took place and, faced by immensely superior numbers, the position of the imperial forces was highly critical. The Emperor then sent up two battalions of the regular army trained by the British military mission, and their British officers and non-commissioned officers went with them; he also appealed to the British Government for help. The regular battalions behaved with an efficiency and discipline that won high praise and probably saved the Emperor from a very serious threat to his power. It is not known how many Ethiopian soldiers were killed but among those dead was the British colonel of the armoured car regiment, while two other British officers were seriously wounded. The British Government sent bombing aeroplanes to attack the rebels, taking this action on the grounds, it may be supposed, that these disorders threatened, during a time of war, the main line of communications between Eritrea and those British forces which were still in Ethiopia. It would be a much more difficult question as to whether, in time of peace, the British Government should afford military help for the suppression of a rebellion against the Emperor or one of his successors.

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[1] General Notice, No. 3 of 1942.

It is likely that Tigré, flanked with its unruly Gallas, will continue to present one of the Emperor's most difficult problems of provincial government. The problem is of more than internal interest, since Ethiopia is to-day claiming the return of that part of Eritrea which is really northern Tigré. The unconditional cession of this area should certainly be refused according to General Longrigg, who as the Chief Administrator of Eritrea, was the close neighbour of Tigré from 1942 to 1944. He bases his view not only on the historical grounds that 'direct rule by the Shoan dynasty has hitherto been a record of ceaseless rebellion and discontent',[1] but also on his present observations. 'The Tigré', he writes in 1945, 'is still wild and unruly, a stranger to modern ways, unchanged in its medieval ignorance.'[2]

GOJJAM

Even more obscure than the Tigré rebellion was some trouble that developed in Gojjam. Trouble might, indeed, be expected in this province which, though it has not the cultural differentiation of Tigré, is, as regards communications, more remote from Addis Ababa. The valley of the Abbai (the Blue Nile) curves round Gojjam on the southern side. In 1925 the course of the great river in its deep valley was still unmapped.[1] As late as 1934 there was no road to the chief centre, Ras Hailu's headquarters, Debra Markos, and it was estimated that the average rate of progress in much of the province was two-and-a-quarter miles an hour by mule.[2] Access by road and bridge was very limited even after the Italian conquest, and communications within its borders are still very primitive. The Gojjam chiefs are said to have understood the meaning of roads well enough to have resisted their construction, and the high degree of automny the province had enjoyed under the *Negus* Takla Haimanot and his son Ras Hailu had fostered the sense of isolation. The reasons that had made Gojjam the most resistant of all provinces to the Italians and that had led to its selection as the first and main base of operations for the patriot movement were also reasons why Haile Selassié should find in it one of his most difficult administrative problems.

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[1] Longrigg, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

The war of liberation itself had underlined some of the difficulties. Ras Hailu appears to have little claim to any outstanding qualities as a leader or an administrator and yet so great was his hold upon the loyalty of Gojjam—of which, it will be remembered, he had been deprived after his rebellion against Haile Selassié in 1932—that with the development of hostilities both the Italians and the patriots had to hope for his help or, at best, his neutrality. The Italians, who had already treated him as the first subject of Ethiopia, now sent him back to Gojjam and dangled the title of *Negus* before him. Hailu's influence was such that, when he wrote to the chiefs of Gojjam, many of them made submission to the Italians even though Sandford and the Emperor's agents were already working in the province.[3] Hailu, in company with large numbers of his supporters and auxiliary forces which were armed by the Italians, succeeded in sitting upon the fence until the last possible moment of the military operations. These culminated in a night assault upon his city of Debra Markos. Even when Hailu, in the uniform of an Italian colonel, at last came out to negotiate, a young leader of the patriot forces went down on his knees to kiss the great man's hand.[4] The Emperor was cold but, as always, clement. Hailu's punishment was not death but the old compulsory residence at the capital. He is now advanced in years and may rank in Ethiopian history as the last of the great provincial magnates of the old order. It is interesting to record that in spite of Hailu's record the Emperor felt obliged to appoint his nephew Hailu Belau as governor-general of Gojjam, presumably because of the attachment of the Gojjam people to this dynasty.

His province was not to be fitted easily into the new highly centralized provincial scheme. Gojjam chiefs had been quarrelling with each other as well as with the Italians even during the war of liberation, and the province remained difficult. We have seen in the chapter upon finance that concessions had to be made to Gojjam, as to Tigré and Bagemdir, with regard to land taxation.

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[1] Cheesman, *Lake Tana*, pp. 1–2.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[3] Sandford, p. 113.

[4] Steer, *Sealed and Delivered*, p. 188.

The usual obscurity hangs over the trouble which later developed in Gojjam. It can be said only that some Gojjam chiefs were arrested and imprisoned and that when one of these escaped the case was thought of sufficient importance to be tried by the Emperor's special court and to justify the public hanging of some nine men concerned in this escape on the charge of treachery.

In 1944 the Emperor visited Gojjam 'on a tour of inspection with regard to the reconstruction and modernization' of the province. In a speech he made upon his return he commented upon the small achievements of the Italians in this province—thus tacitly admitting that they had done something elsewhere—and he went on in words which give an insight into his approach to the task of provincial administration: '. . . this trip has allowed me to project the first basis of a plan of reorganization . . . and secondly to study profoundly the different competent services in order that a series of improvements be made in the various spheres: Administrative, Health, Hygiene, Public Instruction, and Works of General Interest.'[1]

THE WESTERN PROVINCES

Moving south and west in our survey we find that there is even less to be learned about conditions along the 'black border' than there is in the northern regions. The frontiers with the Sudan have been relatively quiet and although the Ethiopian officials there were of mixed quality some of the new ones were said to be very good. Great efforts were being made in these outlying regions to keep the roads open. Unfortunately in the first two or three years of the restoration there was great irregularity, to say the least, in the payment of salaries, so that the officials were reported to be living by direct exactions which pressed heavily upon the people.

In the northern part of the negro strip the families of the Khogali and Abu Shok chiefs were again recognized in Beni-Shangul and Guba. Wallaga, which had been a semi-autonomous province under its Galla chief before 1935, was brought into the new system and in 1945 was ruled by a Shoan governor-general, the son of Ras Kassa. There was an inevitable conflict between this relatively modern-minded young official and the older authorities in the region. Great efforts seem to have been made to get corrupt or oppressive agents to enforce security, and to suppress the exaction of private tolls which in 1943, in spite of prohibiting legislation, were still being levied. It was necessary to induce people to hunt down brigands with the promise of their rifles, and heads were brought into the government post as proof of such claims. The difficulty with the Gallas in these remote parts was their ignorance of their new rights under the law and their docility under unjust treatment. The discovery of coal and iron in this province, in addition to gold, may bring economic development to this region.

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[1] *New Times*, 8 July 1944.

Turning farther south, no impartial information can be obtained of the Sidamo regions; the same is true of Maji and those other negro districts which were so gravely ill-treated during the forty years before the Italian invasion. They appear to have been practically closed districts to foreigners. In 1943 there seems to have been some recrudescence of raiding for cattle and women, which had repercussions over the Sudan frontier. It was reported from the Kenya side of the border that the district of Bako, east of Maji, seemed to be entirely unadministered.

Jimma, which was made an important centre by the Italians and endowed with a water supply, a hotel, a cinema and many residential and other buildings, seems to be developing still further as a focus of administration, education, and trade. In 1944 it was reported to contain thirty Europeans. As it is the capital of the large province which embraces Maji and Kaffa, it may be hoped that it will be a centre of enlightenment spreading its influence westward. In March 1944 the Emperor paid a state visit to Jimma and was received with a great display of loyalty and satisfaction; crowds turned out along the route with flags, and men threw themselves in front of the car to gain an opportunity of presenting their causes to their ruler. It is another example of the difficulty of gauging the Ethiopian situation that it is difficult to know how far such a demonstration was spontaneous.

Similarly, while to one European observer at least the government offices seemed well staffed, and gave an impression of radiating a new atmosphere of efficiency, vigour, and public service, others give a quite different opinion. According to one piece of direct evidence the Amhara officials have not got over their dislike of being appointed away from the capital even in so relatively accessible a place as Jimma. Service there is highly unpopular. This is because it is hot and malarial and means working among people of a different race and religion. It is not that there is any sign of antagonism even in religious matters: indeed, relations with the people seem to be fairly good. Local Gallas are used freely in the lower, though not in the higher ranks of the Jimma administration. The heir to the old Sultan was in disfavour and was kept as a semi-prisoner in Addis Ababa. Even in Jimma, official salaries were badly in arrears. One of the saddest sights here is the rapid destruction or decay of the many Italian buildings which so impressed those who first reached the city during the war of liberation. While this is partly due to their poor construction, it seems much more the result of neglect, looting, and damage by the people.

No reports are available about Kaffa. According to one European who visited it quite recently, it was to a large extent unadministered and it seemed highly improbable that the elaborate new provincial system was really working there at all. Public security was said to be less satisfactory in this region than farther east. One probable reason for this is that if Amhara officials regard Jimma as exile they have stronger words to apply to Kaffa. The Italian régime must have given the Kaffa people a chance of recovery after their former oppression which, it may be hoped, will not be renewed with the return of Amhara rule.

BORANA

Farther south, in the Boran province, the Ethiopian government met with some serious difficulties. Frontier incidents here had often made for friction with the Kenya Government. In 1942–3 the situation there became very out of hand. The British had been holding this region as far north as Negelli, and upon their withdrawing the Ethiopian Government sent in a very ill-chosen governor with some irregular levies who badly misbehaved themselves. Among other results raiders crossed the frontier and murdered a British District Commissioner and some of his African escort. The still untamed Arusi Galla took to raiding and some detribalized Somalis enjoyed themselves in their own way. After strong protests from the Kenya Government, a detachment of British military mission troops was sent down to restore order, and, though they were by no means welcomed by the local governor, their highly efficient and disciplined patrol soon achieved its purpose. This was followed up by the posting of some of the newly trained police force under a British officer, while a detachment of troops at Negelli was a valuable reserve. Thus, at least for the time, this wild frontier province was restored to something like order.

SOMALI PROBLEMS

Farther east the position of the Somalis presented a grave and complex problem. We have seen how on the very eve of the Italian war the

Ethiopian Government had begun to send its representatives to establish posts in the hitherto almost unadministered wastes of the Ogaden. These tentative beginnings were swept away with military defeat. The Italians, though ruthless in their treatment of the Somali labour they used upon their precarious plantations, appear to have been lenient in their policy towards the Somali people as a whole. This was in line with their pro-Muslim policy, itself directed against the Amharas. They had, moreover, made considerable use of Somali levies against Ethiopia, and this, with captures of abandoned weapons and ammunition, had done much to satisfy the Somali hunger for firearms. This people had not suffered very much from the war. They had largely maintained their stock, and the successive defeat of their several rulers, Ethiopians, British, and Italians, had naturally had an unsettling effect, and had increased their lawlessness and self-confidence.

There were, however, even deeper difficulties than these. The Somali movements across international frontiers in search of water and pasture are essential to their existence and are governed by the meagre and irregular rainfall, but they had, as we have seen, been a great source both of intertribal conflict and of international embarrassment. When the British fought their way up from the south the whole of Somalia passed under their military government. This unification was an immense administrative advantage; it made it possible for the many Somali problems to be dealt with as a whole for the first time and lessened the chances of disorders which, since military action in these thirsty wilds is a very elaborate and costly business, would have been a great embarrassment in time of war. It was for these reasons, and because the newly restored Ethiopian Government seemed quite unready to undertake effectively the administrative, financial, and military liabilities of this large section of Somalia, that Britain insisted in both the 1942 and the 1944 agreements in retaining control of the Ogaden.

Behind the more localized nomadic rhythm of the Somalis there is a larger movement, only apparent over a series of years, which is likely to cause increasing difficulties in this region of Africa. This movement, which is only one part of a vast tendency across north-central Africa where 'the desert and the sown' approach each other, sets in as the Somali camels, sheep, and goats gradually denude these semi-desert regions of what is left of their vegetation and move on to new land. The problem seems to be enhanced by an increase in the population. The international frontiers were a slight check upon this south-westward movement, but the Italian Government, when they unified Somalia, appear to have encouraged it at the expense of neighbouring peoples.

The general ecological survey financed under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, which has already begun in British Somaliland, shows, with the help of many interesting maps, both the regions within which each section moves to and fro and the general trend southwards into the Ogaden and through Italian Somaliland. This movement is already felt as far south as the river Tana in Kenya, and in Ethiopia presses across the administrative frontier between the Ogaden and Ethiopia proper upon the Boran and Arusi Gallas, and even northwards into southern Danakil country. This pressure, before which the Gallas retreat, represents a grave future problem for the three governments at present concerned and it is the background against which must be set some of the difficulties the Ethiopians have had recently with the Somalis.[1] It also supplies a strong argument for a unified administration over the whole Somali area of migration. It is, therefore, a problem which will demand very serious study by the Foreign Ministers who, as will be explained in Appendix G, have pledged themselves to settle the future of Italian Somaliland before February 1948.

A section of the Somalis showed restlessness and discontent under the restored Ethiopian Government by an outbreak in May 1943 in the broken and hilly region round Gursum, which lies between Harar and Jijiga. Here a section of the Gheri Jarso Somalis drove out the irregular Ethiopian troops and the Amhara residents, burning their villages and sacking the main market centre of the district, Funanbira. It was an awkward moment for all concerned. At this time British East African troops were still at Harar and the trouble was astride their line of communications to the south. Moreover, as Gursum is at a point where Somali, Amhara, and Galla regions meet it was feared that the unoffending Gallas might suffer from long-drawn-out operations. A request was therefore sent for some troops trained by the British military mission. Two battalions of these troops with some pack artillery easily restored order and carried out the subsequent difficult pacification with a discipline and moderation which made a great impression upon the countryside and quickly restored confidence. There can be no doubt that there was deep hostility in this region between the two people, but observers saw little sign of religious fanaticism and the disturbed area settled down remarkably quickly. Fortunately the neighbouring Somalis under British administration remained quiet and did not go to the help of their fellows.[2]

A larger problem confronted the British authorities in the need to call in the dangerous accumulation of weapons in the hands of the Somali tribes. The British were in control of the Ethiopian Ogaden, but there were still some Somalis on the very slightly administered Ethiopian side of the new provisional frontier: these were heavily armed and were raiding the British administered zone. It was therefore agreed that Ethiopian and British forces should co-operate in a prolonged patrol of the frontier in order to restore order and collect arms. The Ethiopian Government sent in both territorials and two battalions of the mission-trained regular army. The former proved inadequate for an operation which required great patience and discipline, and the endurance of physical conditions which are abhorrent to most Ethiopians. The latter, however, showed excellent discipline and restraint through five months of very delicate and trying operations.

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[1] *Report on General Survey of British Somaliland, 1944*, published by the Military Government of Somaliland, 1945.

[2] Cmd. 6589/1945, p. 12.

This joint effort proved very successful. The British provided nearly all the transport and all the extra cost. British officers came down with the Ethiopian regulars who were based upon Fich. The disarmament was carried through with the minimum of difficulty, with the display, but without the use, of force. Only two Somalis were killed during the whole operation. The restoration of order along the Ethiopian-Ogaden border revealed, however, the administrative obstacle of the Webbe Shibeli. This water-course for most of the year cuts the Ogaden off from the Arusi, leaving these still wild and semi-nomad Gallas in a gap between the policed Borana and the disarmed Somalis. The better administration of the Arusi will be the Ethiopian Government's next task. Turning to the Danakil country, we learn that an attempt has been made since the restoration to improve its administration and especially the control over the southern area by setting up a sub-province of Harar which includes some of the Danakil and other tribes west of the Awash which were formerly under Shoa. A young governor was given this new charge and has worked hard to stop the usual inter-tribal fighting between Danakil and Somali groups by setting up police posts.

The independent position of the Sultan of Aussa has already been described. It was almost inevitable that it should clash with the new policy of centralization, especially now that the new Assab road gave access to his country. Early in 1944, probably on the grounds that the Sultan was levying unofficial tolls on the road, an Ethiopian expedition was sent which succeeded in capturing the Sultan. He was brought to Addis Ababa where, shortly afterwards, he died. One of his relations was put in his place as Sultan.

CONCLUSION

In this very cursory survey of the provinces since the restoration, attention has been concentrated upon the districts where troubles have occurred, partly because these most clearly show the difficulties of provincial administration and partly because troubles attract attention and lead to some information becoming available. It must be repeated that when the great extent of the empire is borne in mind, its varieties of peoples and conditions and its violent changes of fortune in the last twelve years, the speed and ease with which the Emperor's administration appears to have been re-established is very impressive.

This favourable impression relates to the restoration and to the superficial aspects of the subsequent position. There is a level beyond which we cannot probe. Over by far the greater part of the provinces and their administration a veil of secrecy hangs. Few outside witnesses even pass through these regions; fewer still have time or qualifications to study their government, and no reports are as yet published. It is impossible to know how fully the new provincial system is working. It would be unrealistic to attempt to judge it by British standards of administration. It is probable that no serious outbreaks of discontent could occur, especially in the north, without the fact, if not the circumstances, being widely known. It is, however, less certain that serious maladministration, especially of the subject groups of the south-west, might not occur without any clear knowledge of it reaching the outside world. In view of the past history of these regions it would have been reassuring if the Emperor had made use of qualified European advisers in these parts or had encouraged visitors to study their conditions.

All empires are under criticism to-day and past events in this region suggest that the Ethiopian Government would greatly increase its standing and reputation in the world by a policy not only of reform but of publicity. The provisions in the United Nations Charter for the direction of international interest upon the conditions of all backward peoples who have been annexed to the empires of foreign rulers, which have been willingly accepted by Great Britain, would seem to apply with complete propriety to the regions and peoples conquered by Menelik.

PART THREE

CONCLUDING REVIEW

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

TENDENCIES AND PROSPECTS

We have considered, as far as the paucity of the evidence allows, the main institutions of the Ethiopian Government. Now we draw back from this serial scrutiny of departments and aspects, and try to gain a general view of the character and prospects of this African kingdom.

Ethiopia, with a cultural life that for long periods has been isolated and stagnant, might be compared with a rock-pool high up on the shore, which is filled at intervals by the tide of influence from the great world. Waves from the Semitic, Hellenic and early Christian civilizations reached this altitude in turn and ebbed away again. It was not until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that another full tide of European influence reached the country. Its effects were limited—they were, indeed, consciously resisted—and it would be true to say that since that time the civilized world has been changing in ways that have hardly affected Ethiopia. In the last hundred years developments in the world at large, especially in the material aspects, have been advancing at an ever-increasing pace, while Ethiopia, outside the immediate radius of the capital, remained almost unchanged.

The full tide of world influence broke in upon the country at last with the storm of invasion and conquest. Many of the barriers between Ethiopia and the western world, both physical and mental, were roughly broken down. What we see there now since the liberation is the almost hectic attempt to make good the lost centuries of development by forcing this sprawling collection of territories—old and new; Christian, Muslim, and pagan; Hamitic and negro—into a highly centralized state-structure, with the complete set of administrative and economic devices borrowed from the most highly organized societies.

As we contemplate this hurried process we naturally ask what are its prospects of success. As regards the next twenty years or so there are really two questions. Will this Emperor and perhaps his successor, be able to carry out the present immense programme of constitutional construction and social reform? The second question goes deeper. Amongst peoples of this kind and condition, can such great changes be carried through at the speed which has been set without injuring or destroying their essential character and social initiative? These questions could be asked to-day of many peoples who are being subjected, involuntarily or by design, to the action of more rapid and comprehensive change than history has hitherto recorded. The answer cannot yet be given. Much more experience and much more study of that experience by social historians and psychologists is needed before we can tell how quickly and how deeply men and groups of men can be changed by the strong agencies that have come into the hands of the modern state. It is therefore only possible to comment in tentative words upon the beginnings of these changes in Ethiopia and, with the evidence of the preceding chapters in our minds, to reckon up the advantages and disadvantages with which the Ethiopian Government begins its formidable task. This may be defined as one of centralization and modernization.

This book will have shown that the Emperor starts with two great advantages. Though his state is still so largely medieval in character, he is not likely to find in his way the two classic medieval obstacles to royal power, the church and the nobility.

The church, as we have seen, has already felt the hand of the state, and the intense Ethiopian nationalism of the liberation has, true to historical type, quickly expressed itself by attacking foreign ecclesiastical control, and integrating the church more closely with the state and nation. There was no need, however, even though the change meant a breach with very ancient tradition, to use revolutionary methods to bring it about; state and church were too closely fused in a partnership in which the former was always dominant, for any acute conflict to develop. It might be more true to say that the church itself was part of the very essence of Ethiopian nationalism. A great religious leader might have stood out upon the issues raised, but the leadership of the church, seldom strong, has been weakened by its degree of complaisance towards the conqueror, while the head of the state could claim to be not only traditionally but by his faithful piety the head of the church. The Ethiopian reformation, so far, like that of England in its first stage, one of government only, has thrown up no More or Fisher. But then the breach with the Coptic Church and Patriarch has not been made complete.

The second possible rival, the so-called feudal aristocracy, has been analysed with some care to show upon what shifting and weak foundations it stood as a rival to the imperial power. We have seen that the great, enduring provincial lineages which checked the royalties of western Europe were almost unknown in Ethiopia; with the end of provincial isolation it is hard to see how strong men will be able to build up a regional family power, apart from their imperial agency, even to the usual Ethiopian tenure of two or three generations. It is certain that the present Emperor will guard against the first hint of such detached authority. The day of the great provincial magnate seems to have gone and as Seyum or old Hailu tread the round of public occasions at the capital, they are like the guarded exhibits of the last of a dying species. It seems most unlikely that the central government, by losing all the new advantages in its hands, could allow a prolonged revival of the old kind of provincial lordship.

The Emperor may be able to take lightly these two traditional obstacles to his policy, but he finds a third and more complex difficulty. His new structure of government is likely to be very expensive and the whole economy of Ethiopia must be reshaped in order to carry it. The chapters upon this subject have shown some of the difficulties, and also the initial success, unexpected even by Europeans most closely in touch with these matters, with which they appear to have been surmounted. The latest information from the Ethiopian Government, which has been coming in late in 1946 as these final chapters are being revised, strengthens this impression. The revenue and expenditure figures look healthy and the American governor of the bank speaks in confident terms. It must be admitted that some of this information has been issued in a propagandist mood in order to prove Ethiopia's financial competence to undertake at once the government of Eritrea, which is likely to be a financial liability.

The immediate budgetary position thus appears very promising, but a deeper analysis of Ethiopian economic capacity discloses some grounds for caution in any forecast.

It must first be asked whether the Italian influence upon the economic life of the country has been wholly beneficial. On the credit side must be placed the costly roads, buildings, and installations, representing an achievement which no Ethiopian government, left to itself, could have conceived, directed or financed. The Ethiopian Government has endeavoured at the Peace Conference and elsewhere to depreciate almost to nothing the value of this legacy. It remains, however, considerable. But the gift was two-sided. The Italians brought into the country new standards of life and of luxury. It will be long before they can be enjoyed outside a small circle and for a period, in what is still a very poor and undeveloped country, the sudden intrusion of these standards may not be entirely healthy in its effects.

This leads directly to the consideration of another economic aspect of the present situation which is somewhat disturbing. Ethiopia has been a country where the strong have always preyed upon the weak; this was done within the ancient limits of custom in Ethiopia proper and without such restrictions in subject territories. It was hardly to be expected that wholly new moral attitudes could be developed overnight to fit the new administrative forms. The rapid creation of a modern state-system has meant the sudden extension of state initiative or control into the economic sphere, and this development offers remarkable new opportunities to bad old habits. The Italian devices of control and of state-corporations were new and interesting models. Unfortunately it is known from Italian reports and the way in which some of the building and other contracts were carried out that gross corruption flourished in the Italian administration. The natural movement towards economic centralization was hastened by the demands of the Allies in the Middle East during the war for the stimulation and control of exports, especially of grain, by the Ethiopian Government. This put great power and great opportunities into the hands of the small minority at the top which handled what were, to the Ethiopian people, these novel and mysterious transactions. It was common knowledge amongst Americans and Frenchmen, as well as British who were concerned with matters of supply in the Middle East, that grave questions arose as to the way in which these affairs were handled in Ethiopia. These questions referred not only to such matters as the interminable delays, inefficiency, adulteration and so on, but to more serious issues such as the economic treatment of the peasant producers, and the passing on to them of price increases conceded in order to stimulate their activity. Full reports upon these transactions might allay the doubts that were felt but there is as yet no public opinion in Ethiopia which could demand such reports, and the government would not, presumably, consider it had any obligation to satisfy foreign critics whose standards in these matters it does not, perhaps, either accept or understand. The contemporary historian can do no more than warn readers, or at least those who have been misled by propaganda, against assuming, without further evidence, that a spirit of strict financial probity and of social obligation governs all the economic activities of the Ethiopian state.

Ethiopia faces other difficulties in developing an economic life which can support the new plans for the modernization of the country. We have seen that the tradition of the people had become martial and religious and scornful of the commerce and crafts which were left mostly to the Muslims and aliens. The ancient tradition of Ethiopian architecture was already decadent in the sixteenth century and succumbed easily before the disorders of that period. Certainly the Portuguese who described the country in the seventeenth century found only unwalled towns or castles and small round houses of one story covered with thatch.[1] When Father Paez in the seventeenth century built a two-storied palace on Lake Tana for the Emperor, the Ethiopians exclaimed in wonder at 'a house upon a house'.[2] The impressive castles of Gondar, foreign in design if not in construction, were left to crumble away until the Italian conquerors did something to restore them. Plowden was shocked to think that the cultural heirs of the Ptolemies and of Aksum had forgotten the arts both of architecture and of making coins. Even the prolonged teaching and example of the Portuguese were, by his time, forgotten. 'No person in Abyssinia', he said, 'can now make mortar.'[3] Guèbrè Sellassié recounts how some of Menelik's subjects came upon the ruins of some ancient churches destroyed in the sixteenth century by Grañ, and were struck with astonishment.[4] Much of the characteristic metal work, such as the crosses carried by priests, is said to be the craft of alien artisans. The religious painting stigmatized —perhaps a little too harshly—by Bruce as 'A daubing much inferior to the worst of our sign-painters',[5] maintains its flat, insipid conventions century after century. There is the same lack of creative spirit in literary art. One of the latest students of Amharic writings goes so far as to conclude that except for an interesting philosophic work 'there is hardly any Ethiopic literature in the European application of the term', and no Ethiopian who might justly be called a great poet or writer. Translators and conventional theologians took the place of original and creative writers, and many of the translations were made by Syrians and Arabs.[6]

If the Ethiopians are deficient in inventiveness, in creativeness, and in traditions of craft and industry, the building up of their economic life will require a great deal of help from foreigners, and a sustained direction and stimulus from the centre. In this matter also the Emperor is very active. The centre of stimulus is in the Permanent Exhibition of the Ministry of Agriculture, Commerce, and Industry, the third year of which was opened by the Emperor in November 1946. He commended it on the grounds that 'the development of industry will enrich Our Country. Secondly, it will strengthen Our Government and justify its honourable name.' It appears from the official reports that a great effort is being made to retain and develop the industries introduced by the Italians, and also to foster indigenous crafts. There has, however, been an increasingly strong note of propaganda running through all official information from Ethiopia, and where there is no independent comment upon recent information we are obliged to admire the policy and reserve our judgement as to the scope of the performance.

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[1] Alvarez, p. 403
[2] Ludolphus, p. 210
[3] Hotten, p. 141
[4] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 1, p. 169 and *n.* 9. His editor does not think that even these old churches were the work of Ethiopians.
[5] Bruce, vol. 3, p. 315.
[6] Ullendorff, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

These, however, are only sectional aspects of the main problem which the Emperor has set himself. It is not this class or that, or even viewed by itself, the economic standard of the country, which makes of Ethiopia a difficult subject for abrupt reconstruction on the European model. The Emperor has to conquer history, geography, and race, and to do so, at the pace he has set himself, before the vast majority of his people can be brought by education to understand his purposes or to co-operate with them. He cannot do this without changing the nature of the imperial power he inherited. Must he change it into a modern bureaucratic dictatorship of the kind that has been fastened in recent years upon more than one undeveloped country? It is no criticism of the Emperor or his people to consider his dilemma and to review the factors which seem to favour or to discourage his hopes.

There is much in the immediate situation that seems favourable. A modern-minded, prophetic and very cold-hearted ruler of Ethiopia might almost have planned such an event as the Italian conquest as part of a long-term programme for the modernization of Ethiopia. The invasion broke the crust of tradition which in the undisturbed centuries had set too hard but which it was difficult to pierce from within. Italian rule gave a demonstration, however incomplete, of European methods of government, industry, transport, and—though these were applied mainly to Italians—of social services and amenities. And yet so far as we can judge, this foreign rule was sufficiently brutal, self-interested, and short-lived to prevent it corrupting the independent will of the ruling people. The campaign of liberation in which Ethiopians met and co-operated with tens of thousands of British Commonwealth soldiers was not without its own lessons. The advantages must be set off, if these were not impossible of exact assessment, against the suffering and loss of life caused by one of the most cruel acts of aggression in modern history.[1] There must also be set down among the imponderable liabilities the increased bitterness and suspicion towards the white nations that remain in the minds of Ethiopians at a time when full co-operation with them is so desirable. This has been the result not only of the aggression but of its background of international diplomacy which left Ethiopians with a justified sense of betrayal.

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[1] The official Ethiopian claim is that the loss of life was 760,300: the demand for reparations is £185,000,000 (*Ethiopian Memoranda*, 1945).

As a result of the events of the preceding six years, the situation in 1941 was highly favourable to the policy of centralization and modernization. This policy, begun by Menelik, carried further by Haile Selassié, could now be imposed with a speed and comprehensiveness which make the earlier efforts seem very cautious and unsystematic. A study of the volume of legislation in the official gazette compels the question whether this centralization is not being pushed too fast and too far. On merely practical grounds can Ethiopia possibly supply for at least some ten or fifteen years the literate and even half-trained staff for such an elaborate and highly articulated state service? If, as has been suggested earlier, not without some evidence from Ethiopia, the system breaks down over large areas of administration or of territory, the effects may be not only confusing but even demoralizing, and it may prove harder, when staff is available, to extend an efficient and well-regulated form of administration.

There are questions which probe even more deeply. Are there not signs already in Ethiopia which, bearing out experience in other parts of the world, prompt the fear that very rapid changes imposed from the centre may have certain pathological results? There has been a tendency in the world to-day in important sections of western thought to assume a kind of innocence in small societies especially when they have been wronged by civilized powers and have thus a symbolic virtue by contrast with the vice of imperialism. But in Ethiopia, as in most countries, there were present in latent form or in mild operation the germs of political diseases that could flourish under favourable conditions. Thus many observers have written of the very marked lack of initiative or of a sense of responsibility towards the people on the part of the ruling officials. The complement to this, if not its cause, was the intense distrust manifested from the capital towards provincial officials and the elaborate network of checking and spying which was woven about their activities. Some who know Ethiopia to-day remark the rapid further growth of these characteristics. It is impossible to say whether they have greatly increased as compared with the old régime, but their paralysing effect will now apply to a much larger and more pervasive system of government. The Ethiopians would learn little that would be beneficial from the police and political intelligence methods of the Fascist state which acted for five years upon them and drew many of them into its service.

In the review of the dangers and temptations which face the Emperor in his policy of rapid centralization, we must remember also the important question raised in the last chapter with regard to the neglect of the customary institutions of the local groups. It may be worth quoting upon this issue the view of a very discerning Frenchman late in the last century, a quotation which is more significant when we remember the French bias in favour of centralization and assimilation. 'Abyssinians', he wrote, 'have an instinctive aversion from civil and administrative uniformity. They regard it as the means and also the effect of tyranny. The configuration of their country . . . confirms and assures their local liberties . . . it is because of this that this people has survived, for Abyssinians declare that it is unjust to try and assimilate all parts of the empire and despise those who agree to such treatment.'[1] In discussing this question in the last chapter, it was suggested there that no British Government would have introduced, in modern days, a system of so centralizing and levelling a character as the provincial measure of 1942. It would be an interesting retort to this that a foreign government is not in a strong enough moral position to make drastic reforms even though they may be in the best ultimate interests of the country, whereas a native government can show the ruthless courage of a Peter the Great or a Cromwell. This may be countered, to continue the debate, by pointing out that the Ethiopian Government, as regards a large proportion of its lands and subjects, is itself in the position of an imperial power differing in race or religion from its subject peoples. All the arguments used in British Africa against ironing out the cultural identity and traditional loyalties of subject peoples under an imposed uniformity and those supporting the rights of even small groups to cultural self-determination might seem to apply to these parts of Ethiopia.

The answer to this might be that indigenous institutions among the subject peoples have already died from neglect or oppression and those who have condemned the effects of the old decentralization in the oppressed regions might reserve judgement while they watch to see whether centralization, in spite of its actual and potential faults, may not be at least some improvement upon that unhappy past. This is a fair plea. It is, indeed, easy to understand why the Emperor attempts to tie up his heterogeneous collection of provinces into some kind of unity, even if he must use the Ethiopian brand of red tape for the purpose. A country caught suddenly in the swift tide of the modern world is not attracted by the deliberate, slow-maturing methods to which the happy circumstance of our own British history has, perhaps, given in our eyes an exaggerated sanctity. It is the urgency of the task that dictates the method; all the Emperor's actions before and even more since the period of Italian conquest show his determination to force on the development of Ethiopia as a modern state in spite of all weaknesses in the method, and of obstacles to be overcome in achieving his aim.

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[1] d'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

The method has just been discussed: the main obstacle must be reviewed. It is, of course, that formed by the differences of race, religion, and historical experience, which singly or in combination divide the people brought together into this empire.

The divisions between the components of the old Ethiopia are in a special category. Gojjam appears to present an administrative rather than a political problem. A deeper cleavage is to be found in the historic rivalry and cultural difference between Tigré and Shoa. With tact and efficiency on the part of a central government which can free itself from the accusation of being too Shoan in character, this ancient dualism, which has provided one of the chief themes of Ethiopian history, should not be beyond gradual dissolution. Like a morbid physical tendency it is likely to increase its hold only if the entire body politic weakens. The situation may, however, be complicated by the addition of the Eritrean highlands which were so closely linked with Tigré. This would greatly increase the non-Amharic-speaking group and add the rather incalculable element of some half-million people who have known fifty years of European law, order and economic methods.

Turning to the Gallas we found a more complex and diffused problem. Its importance becomes clear when we remember that they are estimated to outnumber the Amharas and Tigreans, and that they quite literally embrace half the empire. We have seen that there is no such thing as a Galla nation, nor even as yet a common Galla consciousness, and there seems every possibility at this date that a development that would be so disastrous to Ethiopia may be avoided. At present the Gallas, as we saw, present no more than a series of provincial problems which vary in character according to religion and degree of advancement. The most encouraging features of the whole situation are that the Gallas, closely allied in race and yet inferior in civilization, can, under favourable circumstances, be easily absorbed. This process is being actively carried on, especially among the blocks of Galla population which lie in the heart of the empire. It is naturally the Gallas who lie along remote and once neglected or oppressed borderlands who have experienced least assimilative influence.

Conversion to Islam introduces a much more uncertain factor into the Galla situation. As we have seen, a large proportion of the Gallas, including some of the most solid and advanced groups, are Muslims. The historical relationship of Ethiopian Christians to their Muslim subjects and neighbours has been the combination of fierce hostility and of practical co-operation which the circumstances, and above all the Christians' isolation and neglect of commerce, forced upon them. Thus, interspersed with fierce warfare and mutually inflicted atrocities, we find early evidence of the presence of important colonies of Muslim traders playing much the same part as the Jews in medieval Europe, acting as messengers and even agents who could cross the barriers within which the Muslims themselves had imprisoned Ethiopia.

The discrimination against these necessary people does not seem at most times to have been severe. In the north they suffered some restrictions with regard to residence and holding land but when Menelik incorporated large Muslim regions in the south into his kingdom, full toleration was inescapable. Indeed, the agreement which gave a semi-autonomous status to Jimma seems to have included a promise, since withdrawn, not to build churches within the provincial capital. There seems to be no recent interference with Muslim religion and custom and Muslim courts have been recognized as part of the judicial structure. The present Emperor has emphasized by his public actions that he regards the Muslims as full subjects; the newspapers since the liberation record ceremonial visits to his palace of Muslim dignitaries, their presence at state ceremonies and the official welcome given to Muslim boys sent to the schools in the capital. Muslims hold some important positions, official and unofficial, in their own areas. But it seems that few have yet been promoted to any high offices in the central government services, and in this may lie a potential grievance. By a recent gesture, however, and one of obvious significance in view of the causes at issue, the Emperor sent some Muslim delegates to the Peace Conference of 1946. Still more recently he has received with impressive cordiality the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia.

The relationship between the two main peoples in Ethiopia thus seems by contrast with similar situations elsewhere at once fluid and fairly promising. It is, indeed, mainly these other situations in the world to-day that make it difficult to look forward with unqualified hopefulness. It has been shown too often lately how cultural or racial differences, combustible materials lying safely side by side for many centuries, can be suddenly fired from without by political incendiarism. In the Amhara-Galla situation there is always the possibility that religious intolerance upon one side or the other might provoke the Muslim Gallas to raise the banner first of religion and then of nationalism and attempt to rally not only their pagan but even their Christian kinsmen. They would not find this easy, until a much larger proportion of the Gallas becomes literate and so open to the seductive ideas of sectarian nationalism, an idea which the Emperor's schools will combat with the cult of Ethiopian patriotism. But an independent Sudan, especially a Sudan fused with Egypt, and a Somaliland becoming sophisticated and linked with other Muslim states, might become very officious neighbours. It must not be forgotten that Islam in Ethiopia was considered a force worth rallying by Lij Yasu and his Galla father twenty-five years ago; that Harar and Massawa are ancient Muslim centres and were not so very long ago with other Ethiopian borderlands, under Egyptian rule; that the Egyptians have already demanded their return;[1] and, finally, that the Italians did all they could to exalt Muslim influence against the Amharas.

It may be hoped that none of these disintegrating forces will be called into action. The very possibility, however, should be a reason for the Ethiopian rulers to make it their first object, at the same time as they conciliate the Muslim Gallas, to assimilate as fully and as quickly as they can the still-malleable pagan Gallas. There is every sign that this need, which was foreseen by the wise Menelik, is fully recognized. The process of their assimilation, if the ardour of the new bureaucrats can be restrained, could be carried on almost painlessly. It is probable that few questions at issue between the British and the Ethiopians during the first months of the liberation so disturbed the Emperor as the reputed wish of one or two Galla experts on the British side to defend a Galla 'cause'.

There is no social or official bar against the advancement of able and educated Gallas. As we have seen, there has been intermarriage with Gallas in the highest families. The present Empress is of Galla stock. A Galla prisoner, Habta Giyorgis, rose to be Menelik's Commander-in-Chief, ruler of wide lands and the main power in the country during his master's decline. Ras Gobana, a vigorous conqueror under Menelik of Galla regions, was of that race and other illustrious examples could be given. There were a number of Gallas among the young men whose education was assisted before 1935 by the Emperor. Since his return to Ethiopia this policy has been maintained and more than one minister to-day is a Galla. This treatment is probably due in part to the marked tolerance of the Ethiopians, themselves a mixed people whose history made religion of greater importance than race, and partly to the old royal tradition of looking for the closest loyalty to those servants and even slaves who were most completely dependent upon their master's favour. Whatever the reason, the full opportunities open to the Gallas and the absence of any conventional barriers or prejudices against their development, promise very well for the future. The spread of the Amharic language, through its official use, and through the schools, will reinforce the process of assimilation amongst the Gallas and the other peoples.

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[1] *Herald*, 25 August 1945.

The Gallas are, if population estimates are even approximately correct, in a majority. The other conquered races are of far less importance in number or in power: they offer administrative rather than political problems and are sources of weakness rather than of danger. It may be hoped that as the spirit of reform and the practice of control from the centre reaches the western provinces, the Sidamo groups, which have suffered so heavily in the past and who are so near the Amharas in race and culture, may be painlessly assimilated. The Somalis have greater relevance at present to a review of external than of internal problems and in that connection will be considered in the chapter upon this subject in Appendix F.

The negroes, too, represent a weakness rather than a danger, one which humane and efficient administration could in time remedy. Something has been said of the condition of the south-western tribes under Ethiopian rule. To the more ardent friends of the country it may seem ungenerous to leave these dark shadows upon the picture. But the historian must seek to find and to show the whole truth, and all the evidence, scanty though it is, indicts the Ethiopian Government for the conditions it tolerated so long in these regions.

It may be argued that the few men who penetrated to these districts applied high standards of administration and humanity that were inapplicable to a situation in which a rough uncivilized soldiery and slave-owning officials had their way, remote from central control, with a race they despised. That may be, but indulgence would not be claimed in these terms by the present Ethiopian rulers. It is true that excesses committed upon primitive African tribes have not been confined to Ethiopia and that even to-day there remain some parts of their continent where Africans are being obliged, at the cost of bodily and social health, to serve the interests of their rulers. But the more outrageous abuses by Europeans were long ago ended by the pressure of European opinion. Nowhere else in Africa has gross neglect and oppression of the negro been continued so long as in those provinces under Ethiopian rule where, in parts, the tribes were reduced to a remnant of rebellious outlaws. The terrible atrocities perpetrated by some European peoples in the second world war make it impossible for Europeans to regard cruelty as the special vice of the less civilized. But though the lesson to be drawn from this may be a further modification of the old theories of racial superiority, this should not paralyse all efforts, which under the new United Nations Charter have become an international duty, to record and alleviate the wrongs of subject peoples in whatever empire they exist. Places where wrongs have been committed in recent years should not remain secret regions but should be open to investigation and report.

We have reviewed the new centralizing policy of the Emperor, its dangers and the obstacles which it is likely to meet. Let us now look more closely at the capacities and character of the ruling people so that we may reckon up, however tentatively, their prospects of success in the difficult tasks that await them.

It is impossible to think of the Ethiopian people to-day apart from the present Emperor whose history, since 1930, has been their history, and whose ideas are being stamped upon them in these highly impressionable years of their national history. His outstanding quality is tenacity. Holding fast in his hands the gains of the moment his eyes are directed to those of the morrow and the day after. This subtle, watchful, patient and laborious man has devoted all his powers and used all his authority to carry out a policy of exalting his country in the world by centralizing and modernizing her ancient institutions. All passions seem to have been absorbed into this passion, leaving him invulnerable to many of the ordinary weaknesses of men in power. It is this utter concentration, this wholeness of purpose that gives him the still, tense dignity which impresses all who meet him. His actions seem to show that he has completely associated the development of his own power and prestige with those of the church-state of which he is head. His natural and religious moderation, added to the caution which generally accompanies kings who had to acquire their royalty, has so far prevented the insistent pressure of his rule from becoming tyranny.

Europeans who have to deal with the Emperor recognize the force and quality of his will and see in him the sole source of the long stream of reforming measures which, issuing both before and since the Italian occupation, have been reviewed in this book. But full mutual understanding and sympathy between the Emperor and his European associates and advisers seem very rare and many of them have suffered from the subtlety and procrastination of his methods which drive the more ardent first to despair and then to resignation. He, upon his side, seems to have deduced from history and his own experience that no-one outside a very small number of his own people can be fully trusted. With regard to Europeans he shows a settled purpose against falling under the influence of any one man, or any one nation. He never reveals himself as did Theodore to his English friends. It seems as though this distrust was so strong that it makes it difficult for him to judge Europeans fairly; to recognize altruism where it exists, or to keep and make full use of men of the highest character and ability whose services his country so much needs. This suspicion and sensitiveness in the personal sphere finds its public complement in an obsession about all matters touching upon royal prestige and national sovereignty which, over-reaching itself, makes him deny his country even those services he could safely accept from other nations. It seems that the Emperor shares this deep distrustfulness with his people. It may be easy to account for it; it is more important to recognize its corroding effect to-day not only upon the constructive use of foreign help but also within Ethiopian administration. The same fears that lead to the perpetual shifting from one nationality to another among foreign experts find another expression in the restlessness which governs the posting of Ethiopian officials. While almost impossible for a foreigner, it is difficult even for an Ethiopian of outstanding ability to be given the time and the scope to carry through a large creative piece of administration.

The Emperor's mind must be torn between his determination on the one side to assert Ethiopia's claim to equality with the civilized nations and on the other his realization, that he, more perhaps than other Ethiopians, possesses, of his people's backwardness. Sometimes an admission of this difficulty is revealed in his speeches. 'Although', he said on an important occasion in 1946, 'Ethiopia was among the ancient civilizations, it is understood that she must struggle to take her place among the civilized nations of to-day.'[1]

There is reason to consider the difficulties and possible limitations of the Emperor's statesmanship because in some quarters he has been treated with an uncritical laudation and portrayed, indeed, as almost more than human, a being in no sense the product of his place and time. The Ethiopian newspapers show the same preoccupation with the central figure, almost every issue being dominated by his photographs, his speeches, and ceremonious appearances. This, of course, represents the fact of the Emperor's domination and unique position in the country as an innovator. But it might be more hopeful for Ethiopia's future if more were heard of his ministers and others who should be surrounding the throne and sharing responsibility. But whatever diminution may be made from that almost deified stature of the publicized figure, the reality must remain deeply impressive and the sum total of the adventures he has survived and the work he has done should place him, if not in the rank of the great kings of history, at least high in any classification that is not based mainly on the physical scale and statistics of achievement. Certainly in Haile Selassié Ethiopia has her greatest immediate asset, and may count herself fortunate that he is still young enough to promise a further period of rule in which the great changes he has introduced may become stable.

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[1] *New Times*, 24 August 1946. (At the unveiling of the monument to Abuna Petros.)

What of the people he leads? Their character cannot be summarized in a few words, least of all by one who has not lived in their country. But we can consider some of the views of those who from prolonged contact knew them well. The most convincing judgements come from earlier centuries than this, from times when men lived for years, not as now alongside, but amongst the natives of the country. Together their witness builds up an impression of a people of pride and high spirit, the distrust bred by centuries of defending their mountains against all comers tempered by friendliness and courtesy; conservative while not incurious; their lives pervaded by religion without being really spiritual. Their women are lively and relatively to the Muslim and pagan peoples around them enjoy great freedom. They appear to be an easy-going people, lax in their sexual life yet with a high sense of decorum and public manners. They alternate excesses of cruelty which led in Bruce's day to such horrors as flaying men alive and the emasculation of the wounded and the captives, with kindliness and notable acts of mercy. There can be no country where more traitors have been pardoned than in Ethiopia. After the Emperor's return it does not appear that any man paid the penalty exacted in other countries for treason or even suffered punishment for the offence of collaboration. Ethiopians are courageous in war, but neither very inventive nor industrious in the arts of peace outside their practice of agriculture. Perhaps the most marked characteristic in the eyes of foreigners is their overwhelming self-satisfaction, the product of long mastery upon their plateau, their almost unbroken success in throwing invaders back from it and their complete ignorance of the world beyond.

The very earliest chroniclers do not generalize freely, but they give on the whole a favourable report. In the records put together by Tellez we find one of the earliest attempts to summarize the Ethiopian character. 'Almost all these People are understanding and of good Disposition, not cruel or bloody, easy in forgiving of Wrongs. . . . They are naturally very submissive to Reason and Justice.'[1] On the other hand they appeared invincibly conservative and when some scandalous aspect of their institutions was pointed out to them, their reply was: 'This same is and ever was the Form of Government in their Country and it will cause great Troubles to alter it.'[2] ('So tenacious are men of ancient customs', comments the writer, with a moral, perhaps, for later reformers, 'that they will rather be wrong in their own way than stand corrected by others.') Their own king, Theodore, took a gloomier view. 'He found out, however' (so he told one visitor), 'before he had been many years on the throne that the Abyssinians were not capable of appreciating good government; they preferred the opposite and, therefore, he had resolved to rule them henceforward according to their liking.' He had tried to introduce modern reforms and to root out barbarous practices, but his people preferred misrule and rebelled against him. 'I am now determined to follow them into every corner and shall send their bodies to the grave and their souls to hell.'[1]

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[1] Tellez, p. 39.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

His friend, Plowden, who gave great attention to the Ethiopian character, was a little more indulgent, protesting that, 'I would not have my readers think the Abyssinians are wholly bad'. After listing among their defects indolence, 'overweening vanity, entire ignorance of the world beyond Abyssinia', and 'aversion to the smallest change',[2] he goes on to credit them with pleasing manners; with being quick and intelligent, generous, usually humane and indulgent, always polite, and seldom coarse. 'Their conversation often sensible, is always witty. A practical philosophy leads them to prefer laughter to tears. . . . Misfortune and death are generally met with fortitude.' They show none of the morbid excitement of other peoples when committing crimes, they perpetrate them with indifference and later recount them with gaiety and laughter. Women are rarely outwardly immodest but then they have no need to be ashamed of the freest intercourse with the other sex. 'I have never yet been able to discover what an Abyssinian could be ashamed of, except a solecism in what he considers good manners. . . .'[3] 'They have a great contempt for other nations and scarcely know, or do not care, if any exist or not.'[4]

This last theme of complacent conservatism runs through most of the foreign comments upon the Ethiopian character and many variations upon it could be quoted. It is accompanied by the complementary theme of vanity as an element of extreme nationalism. The student of Ethiopian records, unless he is himself above such frailty, will probably especially note those exhibitions of Ethiopian vanity which clash against his own. Thus, just as it is possible to read Egyptian essays in modern history which omit to mention the existence of Lord Cromer, the official chronicle of Menelik's reign can record the death of Theodore without mentioning the name of Lord Napier or the presence of a British army. Ethiopians are often unwilling to admit the influence of the Portuguese upon their history, architecture and art, or their services in defending them from Muslim invaders. It is noticeable in the most recent days how easily propaganda about the country appropriates the considerable material legacy of the Italians and especially their public buildings, photographs of which have sometimes been presented without acknowledgement.[1] There is sometimes a tendency to exaggerate the important achievements of the patriot forces in the war of liberation. It is true that the Emperor often recognizes the part played by his allies. But there is a danger that the great military exertion represented by the huge pincer campaign of the mechanized armies of the British Commonwealth, and the bitter full-scale battle of Keren, may fade progressively out of the picture of the war of liberation left upon the Ethiopian mind.[2] 'Once vanquish the idea that they are perfect, that they are the favoured people of the earth, that nothing can be taught them, and they will be quick and intelligent to learn and to imitate.'[3] If this is true the Emperor might be wise to ensure that his people's illusions are not too extravagantly nourished, as their history has shown that both for peace and for war these illusions have their dangers.

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[1] Rassam, vol. 1, p. 251.

[2] Plowden, p. 395.

[3] Hotten, p. 131 ff.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

One of the most striking features of the opinions of those who visited Ethiopia is the contradictions in their accounts of the disposition of the people, and these may even be found in the same account. Beside examples of ignorance, conservatism, vanity, immorality, and cruelty, are testimonies to the intelligence, chivalry, mercy, tolerance, and above all to the great kindness and hospitality shown to strangers. It seems as though the influence of Christianity and of an ancient civilization struggled against those of isolation and material poverty. Nothing is more pleasing than to see how often, bridging the gulfs of race and culture, the travellers felt deep respect and often friendship and affection for individual Ethiopians they met.

Alvarez strikes this note early. Soon after his landing he remarks of a man: 'He in his blackness was a gentleman . . . he came up to us like a well-born man, well educated and courteous.'[4] Although Bruce left the country in disgust at the ceaseless bloodshed, he, too, remarked how notable men set high standards of conduct. Such was the Gondar priest, to whose character he pays tribute, who lamented that the people 'would never abandon the fleshpots of Egypt . . . for the teaching of any priest, however perfect his religion or pure his life.'[1] His whole early record shows that, in his own words, this cultivated Scottish laird lived 'in the most perfect and cordial friendship with illustrious personages'.[2] Rassam, too, was befriended in his captivity by the Ethiopian chiefs who risked safety and even life to help him.[3] Wylde, upon whose cheerful and generous temperament the Ethiopians made perhaps the most favourable of recorded impressions, describes his encounter with a *dejazmach*, 'a perfect specimen of what an Aybssinian gentleman can be',[4] and records that kindness to some Italian prisoners after Aduwa was such that they could be met singing arm-in-arm on the road, their hats gay with the feathers of all the cocks they had eaten, and their only complaint that they had nothing to do! He tells us of other 'gentlemen' —a term that still had meaning in 1899—and of many of the poor who fed Italian prisoners at their own expense.[5] Among a number of striking little portraits drawn in admiring colours by travellers we have one from Salt of a chief who had shown great bravery in killing a lion single-handed. 'His features', wrote Salt, 'were completely Roman, and there was a manliness in his walk, an openness in his manner, and a contempt of all artifice displayed in his conduct, strongly indicative of a brave man. Even the very horse on which he rode seemed to partake, in a certain degree, of the same spirit which animated his master, and would not, as I understood, let anyone else mount upon his back. At the house of this chief we spent one of the most agreeable days I ever recollect passing, in a company not, indeed, the most polished, but where so much genuine character, native worth, and real independence were displayed. . . .'[6]

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[1] It is said that the Italians themselves sometimes claimed the credit for pre-1935 buildings.

[2] A brilliant example of the way in which Ethiopians can handle history is found in the following description of the Italian conquest of Eritrea and Ethiopia. 'The subsequent period of gradual Italian encroachments, involving the victories over the Italian forces at Dogali and Aduwa, and the long, but eventually victorious, struggle against the Italians during the years 1935 to 1941, is too well known to require extensive comment.' *Ethiopian Memoranda*, 1945, p. 7.

[3] Plowden, p. 396.

[4] Alvarez, p. 12.

Later travellers, even some of those critical of Amhara oppression, have emphasized the courtesy and hospitality of individuals, while remarkable tributes have recently been paid, not the least of them by British generals of the 1941 campaign, to the restraint shown a second time by the Amharas towards the defeated Italians.[7] Finally, for latest evidence, we cannot do better than quote from one who knows Ethiopia as do few others to-day and who has served her well. 'The motive force is there. That force springs from young Ethiopia's amazing zeal for education and progress. . . . I have lived with young Ethiopia for five years and I know the warmth and depth with which it repays genuine sympathy.'[8]

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[1] Bruce, vol. 4, p. 267.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 263.

[3] Rassam, vol. 2, pp. 165–6.

[4] Wylde, p. 386.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 405.

[6] Salt, *op. cit.*, pp. 348–9.

[7] Wavell, pp. 3530, 3589, 3590.

[8] Athill, L., "Ethiopian Renaissance', *The Spectator*, 28 December 1945.

In the whole internal picture of Ethiopia there is, indeed, nothing more hopeful than the impression of eager intelligence and vitality which is given by the people and especially by the schoolchildren and the younger men. They represent the active and growing element and the one that will decide the future. However conscientiously we may try to list the characteristics of the people and assess their circumstances, favourable and unfavourable, the picture remains a static one. The unknown, the dynamic factor lies in the will and enterprise of the people and in their capacity for adjustment, as they emerge from all the unsettling experiences of the last eleven years. Their success will depend in large measure upon trust and partnership between Ethiopians and Europeans. For this reason the respect and affection which have so often and over so many centuries sprung into being between individuals from the two continents is another cause for hope.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

ETHIOPIA AND BRITAIN

During the last seven years of her history, Ethiopia has been closely linked with Britain. Although the bonds have been loosened since the expiry of the 1942 Agreement, Britain is likely to remain Ethiopia's most important neighbour, and her policy with regard to the future of the ex-Italian colonies, a question due for determination by the 'Big Four' by February 1948, is a matter of the deepest interest and, indeed, anxiety to Ethiopia. Britain has helped Ethiopia much and could, under certain conditions, help her more. No discussion of Ethiopia's recent tendencies and future prospects can conclude, least for all British readers, without some review of the relations between the two countries.

The full meaning of these relations can be appreciated only in the light of the relevant boundary problems and international negotiations —a summary of which will be found in Appendix F—since Ethiopia's territorial claims intensify the difficulties of her relations with Britain. It should not be forgotten that the British and Ethiopians meet along an immense and very uncivilized frontier. Even before the second world war—if the Sudan is regarded as being in practice under British administration—this frontier from British Somaliland to the Eritrean border ran for some 2,500 miles. At present, except for the very small mileage where Ethiopia meets French Somaliland, the entire frontier of this large, land-locked country adjoins territories administered by Britain. Frontier difficulties have been touched upon in earlier chapters. When they are reviewed it must be remembered that for many years of this century, right up to the Italian invasion, they were a source of constant friction between Ethiopia and Britain. While British administration must bear some of the responsibility for the lawless conditions of these inaccessible regions, the evidence shows that the disorders and the aggressions originated mainly from the Ethiopian side of the border. At one time, for example, well-armed bands of Ethiopian raiders, sparing the nearer tribes, penetrated deeply into northern Kenya in the Lake Rudolf region. A military effort, in which the Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya Governments had to combine, was necessary and upon one occasion the Ethiopian raiders, 350 riflemen, attacked a small British patrol, charging it on and off for four hours with heavy losses on both sides.[1] This and many other incidents necessitated expensive measures for protection by the Kenya Government. Since the liberation, except for the incident in which a British administrative officer was murdered in Kenya, conditions along the frontiers appear to have been better regulated. But any weakening of imperial control in Ethiopia would at once lead to a revival of the old frontier difficulties and it is therefore natural that the British Government takes an intense interest in Ethiopian affairs.

Britain has another deep and legitimate interest in Ethiopia. This arises from the relationship of Lake Tana and the river Abbai with the Nile water system. As this very complex question, which has a very large literature, is relevant to external rather than domestic affairs, no mention has been made of it in this book. But Anglo-Ethiopian affairs cannot be discussed without at least a reference to it. So long as Britain was largely responsible for Egyptian affairs, and while she continues her connection with the Sudan, she must take a deep interest in the possibility of regulating and if possible increasing the Nile water supply. As the largest volume of this water and that part which is most rich in precious silt and which causes the annual rise of the river in Egypt comes from the Gojjam highlands, Britain has always been interested in this region and the question figured largely in diplomatic negotiations between the interested countries. Diplomacy upon this question is, indeed, many centuries old: as early as 1093, when the Nile flood failed, an Egyptian embassy was sent to buy the favour of the Ethiopians, while the latter, not long afterwards, considered injuring Egypt by diverting her water, but changed their minds when they realized that the result would be to irrigate the lands of Muslim enemies nearer home. It is noticeable that in recent years the British Government has given far less diplomatic attention to this question than formerly. In its latest stage it has become extremely delicate, because of the conflict of views between Britain and Egypt about the future of the Sudan, and the rise of Sudanese nationalism. It remains true, however, that the regulation of the Nile waters upon which depend not only the very existence of Egypt but also, because of the great Gezira irrigation scheme, much of the prosperity of the Sudan, can only be fully assured and improved by the co-operation of Britain, Ethiopia, Egypt, and the Sudan. Even if the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium is modified or ceases, the co-operation of Britain as the guardian of the sources of the White Nile and of Lake Albert will be needed.

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[1] Rayne, Major H., *The Ivory Raiders*, 1923, pp. 72 ff.

Ethiopia, proud, assertive, suspicious, could hardly be expected to relish a situation in which one power, the same which had liberated her, seemed to encircle and overshadow her upon almost every side. Yet it is in the interests of both powers to maintain close and friendly co-operation, and to face the difficulties with the intention of overcoming them.

It should be recognized that Ethiopian suspicions of Britain were very natural. There can be no doubt that during the last ten years or so Britain has been Ethiopia's best friend. Nations, however, resent having to be grateful and since benefits conferred amongst nations are so seldom wholly disinterested, the beneficiary can generally find reasons for evading the irksome obligation. Ethiopians could claim that their liberation by British arms was no more than a necessary act of war in the interests of the Commonwealth. Ethiopia, furthermore, was the first but not the last liberated country in which the leaders found it better, for the encouragement of national morale, to exalt the achievements of the resistance movement rather than the victories of the Allied armies. The Ethiopians could, moreover, remember not only the questionable diplomacy of the first twenty-five years of the century, in which Britain was on occasions implicated, but her desertion by the League of Nations in one of the clearest cases of aggression known to history. Britain's very hesitant lead against the aggressor and the ease with which she was reconciled with him could be reckoned against her. True, she offered transport and asylum to the fugitive Emperor, but here, too, it might be asserted that too little was done to honour or help him in his hour of undeserved misfortune.

Moreover, in their great moment of excitement and hope the Ethiopians were made to realize that even the liberating army was a foreign army. It comprised some elements which were not prepared to adjust themselves to the unusual Ethiopian status and the proud character of the coloured, ruling Amharas. It requires little imagination to picture the scattered incidents, some trivial, some important, by which individuals or groups amongst the victorious armies offended the people, and especially the leading people, of the country. Even the jokes or thoughtless talk of soldiers, relaxed after victory, would be carried by interpreters or servants to Ethiopian dignitaries, who were sensitive about their personal and national status.

The offence, however, went deeper than this. There was an almost complete misunderstanding between the British military and the Ethiopian authorities as to the legal and administrative situation which should follow the overthrow of the Italian Government. The British who had been surprised by the speed of their armies' advance began to act upon the long-formed, correct if somewhat unimaginative assumption that Ethiopia was an occupied ex-enemy country, to be administered by the conquerors according to prescribed international usage until its status should be decided by the peace conference. The Emperor upon his side maintained that he had never renounced his sovereignty, had never ceased to be the legal ruler, and could rightly resume at once all his imperial powers.

There was much to be said for the British point of view. Commonwealth forces were scattered throughout the country, and though the Emperor entered his capital on the 5th of May 1941 Gondar did not fall until November; French Somaliland was in the hands of the Vichy Government, while the entry of the Japanese into the war made East Africa an important strategic area. British troops were therefore kept in the country and these acted as a police force and a steadying influence in the first excitement of the change of government. They were also busy collecting and guarding the vast numbers of Italians who numbered no fewer than 70,000 prisoners and 60,000 civilians. Something has been said about this in the chapter on the provinces; here we are interested in the effects upon Anglo-Ethiopian relations of a situation which the British read as putting supreme administrative power in the hands of the military authorities with their specially organized political branch. There is no need to recount in detail the difficulties which arose when the Emperor, acting upon a quite different interpretation of the position, gave his own orders, often without consulting the British.

It was therefore urgently necessary to negotiate an agreement which should define the position of the Emperor and the rights and immunities of the Allied forces. The negotiations proved very difficult. They revealed deep differences between the two sides. On the 4th of February 1941 the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden, made his well-known declaration promising Ethiopia the restoration of her full independence under Haile Selassié, but offering temporary measures of guidance and control.[1] This important declaration left open the question as to how much of the 'outside assistance and guidance' which the Emperor needed, and which was later to be the subject of international arrangement at the conclusion of peace, should in the meantime be provided by the British and by what means. General Cunningham was instructed to act on the lines of this statement in his dealings with the Emperor and 'to establish an administration' in those parts of Ethiopia he occupied. These instructions appear to be contradictory as well as vague, and as he found the Emperor 'was always on the look-out for any measure which would infringe the sovereignty he claimed' relations were not very easy.[1]

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[1] See Appendix C.

There were on the British side two opposed conceptions. One party took a pessimistic view of Ethiopia's conditions and political capacity and believed that something almost approaching a temporary protectorate, or at least a period of tutelage, was required. Political advisers, they thought, should be supplied not only at headquarters but in the provinces, and those who knew anything about the former oppression of the south-west—as did many officials from Kenya and the Sudan—were especially anxious that a more just and considerate administration of the subject peoples should be developed. On the other side were those, who were to be found especially at the Foreign Office, who were far less interested in the reform of Ethiopia than in keeping Britain's reputation in the world free in this matter from even the suspicion of imperialism and who were also anxious to stand clear of what might prove a highly embarrassing and expensive responsibility. There were some who took up this attitude for the quite different reason that they had faith in Ethiopia's capacity to put her own house in order without any form of tutelage. The Emperor put up a stubborn fight against any provisions which might limit, or even appear to limit, his sovereignty, and in the end the Foreign Office view prevailed over the party which was sometimes called that of the Cromerites.[2]

The agreement signed upon the 31st of January 1942, to which reference has frequently been made in these pages, was written in the clearest terms as regards Ethiopian sovereignty; it granted the Emperor the help of British advisers, troops, and finance without any vestige of political control even to meet the immediate situation.[3] The reservations of the Ogaden,of the railway, and of a strip of frontier adjoining French Somaliland were requested and conceded upon grounds of military convenience and as a temporary measure. The Emperor, however, showed that he was irked by these reservations, especially that of the Ogaden. He objected also to the rights and immunities of the military although these were upon the usual lines and although the provision which he most resented, the exclusion of foreign soldiers from the jurisdiction of his courts, had been granted in Britain to the American forces.

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[1] Wavell, p. 3589.

[2] These negotiations were, of course, confidential and the writer, who was in touch at the time with some of those most concerned in them, is not at liberty to write fully upon the subject. Some enlightening indiscretions will be found in Waterfield, G., *Morning Will Come*, 1944, pp. 67 ff.

[3] Appendix B.

An interesting and paradoxical situation arose with regard to the deportation of the Italian aggressors. The British found themselves in the position of wishing to remove all the presumably hated oppressors while the Emperor and his ministers were pleading for some at least to remain. They realized their great need of technicians of all sorts to keep the new installations going; to service and drive the transport vehicles; to help in the hospitals and to perform a dozen other services which no other Europeans were likely to do and for which there were as yet no trained Ethiopians. The Italians with their relatively low standard of life, their easy adaptation to the climate and, in spite of the severe laws designed to buttress the dignity of the master race, their adaptability to the native social life, were well fitted to fill the immediate economic need of the country. A large number remained in the country. It is even said that some provincial magnates hid their Italians until the round-up was over, while other Italians are said to have slipped over the border from Eritrea to seek their fortunes in their lost colony. In 1946 the Emperor could assert that 'Thousands of enemy nationals live our peaceful lives among us'.[1]

The negotiations which resulted in the Second Agreement, that of the 19th of December 1944, brought out clearly some of the difficulties inherent in the relationship of Ethiopia with Britain. Britain readily waived the precedence of her minister and the obligation to employ only British advisers, arrangements which had been quite proper under the exceptional conditions of 1942–4. One reason why the negotiations which, on the British side, were conducted by Lord de la Warr proved so difficult, lay in the Emperor's desire to gain substantial financial help from Britain without allowing in return any guarantee as to how it should be spent, still less any joint arrangements, such as a development trust, to govern its expenditure. This was the rock upon which all plans for financial help were wrecked. Difficulties, indeed, arose over the Ethiopian hypersensitiveness upon all questions touching sovereignty and even prestige. The Emperor showed his usual charming and dignified hospitality to his diplomatic guests—on one occasion he decorated a state dinner with red, white, and blue flowers—but in negotiation he and his ministers used the devices of procrastination and evasion which have been the despair of so many Europeans who have had the task of negotiating with Ethiopians.

It was clear that the question upon which the Ethiopians felt most deeply was the extreme reluctance of the British to hand back the

[1] *New Times*, 24 August 1946.

administration of the Ogaden and of the so-called 'Reserved Area'. The frontier zones had by now been returned and it was decided in 1946, following a Franco-Ethiopian agreement on the matter, that the British military authorities, who had kept the railway running in Ethiopia, should return its management to the French railway company. But the British stood firm about the Ogaden and Reserved Area. Enough has been said about the difficult conditions in Somaliland which led the British to take this stand. The Ethiopians safeguarded their position fully by laying down in article 7 that their agreement was 'In order as an Ally to contribute to the effective prosecution of the war and without prejudice to their underlying sovereignty'. It was agreed that the Ethiopian and British flags should always fly together in this territory. The Ethiopians reserved also some special rights in Jijiga, the main market in the Reserved Area and the only centre of any real importance, which lies northwards in the sandy wastes of the Ogaden.

Even before the negotiations for this agreement were begun, it appeared that the Ethiopian Government was loosening its ties with Britain. The first move away from Britain was towards America. An American economic mission was invited during 1944; a loan from that country was accepted, and a concession to prospect for oil granted to an American company. Some American advisers or experts were appointed in place of British. According to some views this last action was due more to the failure on the part of Britain to produce advisers of the kind desired than because the Emperor was disappointed with those who had held this position, some of whom were returning about this time to the services from which they had been seconded. It appears that the large hopes of American help have not been fully realized. The Emperor has since invited a number of Swedes, sixteen of whom, mostly teachers, were reported as arriving in one plane.[1] He had happy recollections of their co-operation in several spheres before the war and he need have no fear of any hidden designs on the part of Sweden. During 1946 Russia came upon the scene, and it is reported that nearly a hundred of her nationals have been flown to the country and that some of them are running—or intending to run—at Russian expense a hospital at the capital.[2] On the other hand, as we saw in the chapter on education, thanks largely to the unofficial services of the British Council, people from this country still give some help in the schools. This is true also of the legal sphere, of the police, and, through the military mission, of the army.

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[1] *New Times*, 6 April 1946.

[2] It does not appear by the time this chapter goes to press (early in 1947) that the hospital is yet opened.

When the whole story of British relations with Ethiopia is reviewed, the general impression is by no means discouraging. In this brief account attention has been given to the points of difference between the two governments because these require explanation. But given the circumstances and the temperaments of the parties, relations might have been much more painful. Britain's predominant position as ally and neighbour and the implacable distrust and pride of the Ethiopians seemed to promise, when they were forced into close relationship, a period of unbroken storm. The situation is, indeed, worse from an Ethiopian point of view than before the invasion, in that it is no longer possible for her to play off her three neighbours, Britain, France, and Italy, according to the old diplomatic game. Ethiopians realize that if anything went very much wrong with their country and any outside power stepped in or was drawn in, that power would most probably be Britain. That relations have been so friendly and constructive on the whole has probably been due in part to the Emperor's underlying conviction that in essentials Britain was to be trusted. It is probably due to his own personal and royal pride, his need to consider the watchful xenophobia of his people, and the reputed anti-British feeling of some of his closest advisers, that this confidence has been so unobtrusive.

When the history of the years 1940 to 1946 is seen in the perspective of history and not against the nationalist and ideological distortions of truth which are common to-day, then Britain's policy stands out, in all essential matters, as enlightened and honourable. She is a power with a deep and long-established interest in East Africa, especially in its orderly government, and yet, when she was in a position of overwhelming military and political predominance in Ethiopia, she restrained her own power. She restored and respected to the full the legal equality of a very backward and weak state; she made a free grant of money to help the process of restoration, and sent some of the best men she could spare at the time to give expert, sincere, and in some instances devoted help. Of course mistakes were made and temptations were obviously at work. If, to take one example to which attention has been directed, some British authorities believed that a firmer line should be taken in helping the country, this is less a matter for surprise than that, at the cost of great apparent risks, this policy was rejected. Britain's dealings with Ethiopia have, with the one possible exception of the Ogaden question, demonstrated in the most practical way that she respects the rights and interests of small nations, and that she knows how to liberate and to help without demanding as her price that the liberated country should pass under her sole or even dominant economic and political influence.

On the British side there is a reason, in addition to those written on the surface of the situation, in favour of the most helpful treatment of Ethiopia. The country has in the world of ideas an importance beyond that of her physical position. To the subject peoples of the world, themselves nearly all, like the Ethiopians, coloured peoples, this independent African kingdom has long been a focus of interest and of transferred hopes. Japan excited a somewhat similar interest, especially in Asia, but Japan has gone down in disgrace and defeat. Siam, Liberia, and Haiti do not strike the imagination in the same way, nor has their history been so romantic and exciting as that of Ethiopia. The tragic and embittering extinction of Ethiopia's freedom, followed by her liberation, have deepened the world-wide interest in her fortunes.

This interest is felt strongly amongst many coloured groups under foreign government, but amongst the more politically conscious Africans it reaches a strength and significance akin to that of Zionism. Wherever Africans have come to feel and resent their subordination they look to Ethiopia as a source of present self-respect and a star of future hope. An attitude of this kind is bred out of the strong emotional needs of those who hold it; it is a state of mind that hardly allows any rational estimate of the object of devotion. Thus, though the majority of those addicted to Ethiopianism are negroes, they either do not know or refuse to believe that the Ethiopian civilization is not negro: still less do they realize that negroes were regarded by the Ethiopians as natural slaves and were, in modern times, oppressed by them more than by any other ruling people. An attempt by the writer in 1944 to give in the most moderate terms an objective picture of Ethiopia to an audience of sophisticated negroes in Harlem met with a violently hostile and excited reception.

Ethiopianism, indeed, is a sentiment that might be said to increase in intensity with the degree of political awareness and discontent and also with distance from the country of hope. It is thus strong in the United States and in the West Indies, and demonstrations and even riots occurred in these countries at the time of the Italo-Ethiopian war. In the United States, to give one example, a body calling itself the Ethiopian World Federation was formed at the time of the Italian aggression; it recently addressed an open letter to Mr. Byrnes in which it referred to Ethiopia as 'the proud historic homeland of the Black Race', and on the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, 'the great Emancipator', it called upon 'Ethiopians the world over' to repudiate 'nordic imperialistic domination . . . of coloured nations and peoples'.[1] There have been manifestations amongst the more advanced groups of West Africa

[1] *New Times*, 6 April 1946.

where collections were held at the time of the invasion in aid of Ethiopia. The name and the cause of this country stirs many of the South African natives. The present political and educational immaturity of most East African tribes limits the response here though it exists amongst limited circles, especially, perhaps, in Uganda. In this region, however, Ethiopian raids over the border, in so far as they are known beyond the tribes which suffered them for some fifty years, tend to break the enchantment. The word Ethiopia is sometimes attached in the United States to negro churches: where this is true of Africa, the churches are generally—and significantly—those which have asserted their independence of European guidance. It is interesting to remark that there does not so far appear to have been any response from Ethiopia to this movement, nor any noticeable change in the social attitude of Ethiopians towards negroes within her own boundaries, where to call a man a Shankalla—a black—is still a form of abuse.

To analyse the significance of the psychological compensation and emotional relief which distant Ethiopia can supply to Africans who are embittered by some inferiority of status is not to deny justification or value to this attitude. There is reason as well as unreason in Ethiopianism. The country may be somewhat different from the image it throws in Harlem, in Kingston, or in Johannesburg; it may represent Semitic and Hamitic and not negro civilization; yet it is a country of coloured people; it is in Africa, and it has been and still is a testing point of the white man's humanity and liberalism. The success of Ethiopia as a modern, independent African state would be an immense encouragement to all coloured groups on their way to self-government or independence.

The British people desire to continue to help Ethiopia out of their own sympathy and friendship towards her, which were so deeply roused by the tragedy of her conquest and their admiration for the Emperor. Even if they did not feel in this way, it would be the highest wisdom for a country pledged to develop her own colonies towards self-government to act towards Ethiopia so as to win their trust and foster their self-confidence. No just appraisal of Britain's policy, viewed as a whole over a period of years, can be expected from her enemies or from excited nationalism but the effects of a steady and generous policy will in the end, we must hope, yield their results. If generosity and patience are sometimes strained in relations with Ethiopia, the unique difficulties and bitter experience of that country should be remembered and also that Britain has herself, at certain times in the past, given some cause for distrust and disappointment.

This book upon the government of Ethiopia will have shown that if the Emperor is to carry through a rapid, expensive, and exacting policy of centralization and modernization, his country will need a great deal of help from outside. It will also have shown that the Ethiopians find it difficult to accept help upon the only terms in which it is likely to be given, or to make the best use of men and of money from outside if they should be obtained. Too many Europeans who have tried to give unselfish service to Ethiopia have come away disappointed by the lack of understanding or co-operation. This dilemma, in which the Ethiopians seem unable to take what they so much need, seems inescapable and it has led to many gloomy prophecies about the future of the country.

The only comfort is that this gloom has been felt about Ethiopia upon many earlier occasions and even by the keenest observers. How many times do the travellers tell their readers that Ethiopia is in rapid decline, or even upon the brink of ruin! There was the decline from the glories of Aksum, the decline from the height reached in the later middle ages; the disastrous collapse of the eighteenth century; the decline after Menelik's death and the apparent extinction under Italy. Even in most recent years, since the liberation, and amongst those who might be expected to be best informed, the break-up or bankruptcy of the country was sadly but certainly expected. Yet Ethiopia, approaching the beginning of her third millennium, lives on and the prophets are obliged to admit, sometimes almost indignantly, that in spite of all their troubles the people seem happy, their crops and their animals flourish, while their ancient religion continues to give them confidence and comfort. They have, indeed, the resilience of a people living close to the earth, and that, as we saw at the beginning of this book, a good earth, fertile and well-watered. True, their magnificent physical defences have lost their strength; their mountains are no more a protection to them than are the surrounding seas to Britain. It may be, however, that Ethiopia has been fortunate in that she did not lose her almost invulnerable position until an age when the spirit of aggressive imperialism which had taken advantage of this was recognized for what it was and was on the eve of being restrained. Thus, whatever may have been true of the past, it should not be beyond Ethiopia's capacity to adjust herself in this improved atmosphere to a more co-operative relationship with those who are in a position to help her and at the same time to benefit from the new organs of mutual help between the nations.

But whether the new international order will take firm shape is the great issue which hangs in doubt over the new world in the summer of 1946 as this conclusion is being written. The new order, if it can be brought into effective action, will offer Ethiopia a protection that should calm her fears. But it also demands, for its success, two things of its component nations. Firstly that, where necessary with international help, a just and liberal society should be built up within their borders, and its advantages extended fully to alien, backward or minority groups. Secondly, it is required that they should practise in their dealings with neighbouring peoples the same moderation and respect for the new international system that they demand for themselves. It would be unfortunate if, as the old, large, and mature imperialisms renounce their domination, a crowd of raw little imperialisms should take their place. It is true the Ethiopian Government has participated fully since the liberation in all the international activities open to them and the leaders of the country are aware of both the obligations and the benefits of membership of the United Nations. But the leaders are few, and it will be long before there develops an informed and enlightened public opinion that might give steadiness and restraint to Ethiopian foreign policy, which at present depends all too much upon one man.

The new international setting, however effective, will not make it the less necessary for nations to enter into the more informal relationships that their common interests and associations suggest. If formerly retarded and isolated countries are to be helped forward in their difficult task of rapid adjustment to modern needs and ideas, they will need help from groups and individuals given in an intimate and friendly spirit which offers something more than international bodies can allocate or money can buy. Ethiopia has had some noble friends and helpers in the past from Britain and other countries; she still has good friends who in Europe or in her own country are serving her well. This book may end with the hope that our own country at least, through private persons as well as through official channels, will increase the attention and help given to this deeply interesting nation, especially in the sphere in which she seems most to desire our help—that of education. We are reaching a stage when in revulsion from the tyranny and degradation from which the world has just been saved nations must, if they are to assure their salvation, attain a higher standard of morality and altruism in their dealings with each other than has been imagined in the past. This is above all true of the dealings of the strong with the weak, the advanced with the less civilized peoples. Restraint and generosity must be practised without hope of other return than a heightening of national influence and reputation and of international confidence. In such conduct Britain, a mature and experienced nation, could give a lead to the world, showing above all patience in her relations with the suspicions and pride of new or newly-emancipated nations. It appears that in her dealings with India and Burma she is acting in this spirit. There was generosity in her first gestures to the liberated Ethiopia, but in the last two or three years her attitude has been marked rather with correctness. Something warmer is needed; a serious and sustained interest, a greater traffic of men and ideas; fuller help to Ethiopia in her great effort to make herself into a nation. Above all we must convince her that neither as regards her status or her interests has she anything to fear from closer relations with Britain.

Upon Christians especially a country which has preserved her faith for more than 1,500 years in the face of great difficulties has a claim. This does not mean that there is any need to approach Ethiopia in a spirit of illusion, which is likely, when disappointed, to react into one of depreciation. Ethiopia will be served best by those who have made a sympathetic but honest appraisal of the country as she is to-day. In order to help towards such an appraisal this book has been written.

It was in this spirit, if with incomparably greater art, that Ethiopia's first historian wrote in the seventeenth century and we might end by quoting the conclusion which Ludolphus put to his book:

'The Almighty God stir up the Hearts of our Princes to lend their assistance to this Ancient Christian Nation which might prove useful to Propagate Christianity in those Remote Parts of the World, and so glorious to themselves and their Posterity.'

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE SOLOMONIAN LEGEND

Extracted from Sir Wallis Budge's translation of the Kĕbra Nagast *in* The Queen of Sheba and Her Only Son, Menyelek, *pp. 30 ff.*

And when the Queen sent her message to Solomon, saying that she was about to depart to her own country, he pondered in his heart and said, 'A woman of such splendid beauty hath come to me from the ends of the earth! What do I know? Will God give me seed in her?' Now, as it is said in the Book of Kings, Solomon the King was a lover of women. And he married wives of the Hebrews, and the Egyptians, and the Canaanites, and the Edomites, and the Îyôbâwîyân (Moabites?), and from Rîf and Kuĕrgue, and Damascus, and Sûrest (Syria), and women who were reported to be beautiful. And he had four hundred queens and six hundred concubines. Now this which he did was not (for the sake of) fornication, but as a result of the wise intent that God had given unto him, and his remembering what God had said unto Abraham, 'I will make thy seed like the stars of heaven for number, and like the sand of the sea.' And Solomon said in his heart, 'What do I know? Peradventure God will give me men children from each one of these women.' Therefore when he did thus he acted wisely, saying, 'My children shall inherit the cities of the enemy, and shall destroy those who worship idols. . . .'

. . . And King Solomon sent a message unto the Queen, saying, 'Now that thou hast come here why wilt thou go away without seeing the administration of the kingdom, and how the meal[s] for the chosen ones of the kingdom are eaten after the manner of the righteous, and how the people are driven away after the manner of sinners? From (the sight of) it thou wouldst acquire wisdom. Follow me now and seat thyself in my splendour in the tent, and I will complete thy instruction, and thou shalt learn the administration of my kingdom; for thou hast loved wisdom, and she shall dwell with thee until thine end and for ever.' Now a prophecy maketh itself apparent in (this) speech.

And the Queen sent a second message, saying 'From being a fool I have become wise by following thy wisdom, and from being a thing rejected by the God of Israel, I have become a chosen woman because of this faith which is in my heart; and henceforth I will worship no other god except Him. And as concerning that which thou sayest, that thou wishest to increase in me wisdom and honour, I will come according to thy desire.' And Solomon rejoiced because of this (message), and he arrayed his chosen ones (in splendid apparel), and he added a double supply to his table, and he had all the arrangements concerning the management of his house carefully ordered, and the house of King Solomon was made ready (for guests) daily. And he made it ready with very great pomp, in joy, and in peace, in wisdom, and in tenderness, with all humility and lowliness; and then he ordered the royal table according to the law of the kingdom.

And the Queen came and passed into a place set apart in splendour and glory, and she sat down immediately behind him where she could see and learn and know everything. And she marvelled exceedingly at what she saw, and at what she heard, and she praised the God of Israel in her heart; and she was struck with wonder at the splendour of the royal palace which she saw. For she could see, though no one could see her, even as Solomon had arranged in wisdom for her. He had beautified the place where she was seated, and had spread over it purple hangings, and laid down carpets, and decorated it with *miskât* (moschus) and marbles, and precious stones, and he burned aromatic powders, and sprinkled oil of myrrh and cassia round about, and scattered frankincense and costly incense in all directions. And when they brought her into this abode, the odour thereof was very pleasing to her, and even before she ate the dainty meats therein she was satisfied with the smell of them. And with wise intent Solomon sent to her meats which would make her thirsty, and drinks that were mingled with vinegar, and fish and dishes made with pepper. And this he did and he gave them to the Queen to eat. And the royal meal had come to an end three times and seven times,[1] and the administrators, and the counsellors, and the young men and the servants had departed, and the King rose up and he went to the Queen, and he said unto her —now they were alone together—'Take thou thine ease here for love's sake until daybreak.' And she said unto him, 'Swear unto me, by thy God, the God of Israel, that thou wilt not take me by force. For if I, who according to the law of men am a maiden, be seduced, I should travel on my journey (back) in sorrow, and affliction, and tribulation.'

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[1] I.e., three courses and seven courses had been consumed.

And Solomon answered and said unto her, 'I swear unto thee that I will not take thee by force, but thou must swear unto me that thou wilt not take by force anything that is in my house.' And the Queen laughed and said unto him, 'Being a wise man why dost thou speak as a fool? Shall I steal anything, or shall I carry out of the house of the King that which the King hath not given to me? Do not imagine that I have come hither through love of riches. Moreover, my own kingdom is as wealthy as thine, and there is nothing which I wish for that I lack. Assuredly I have only come in quest of thy wisdom.' And he said unto her, 'If thou wouldst make me swear, swear thou to me, for a swearing is meet for both (of us), so that neither of us may be unjustly treated. And if thou wilt not make me swear, I will not make thee swear.' And she said unto him, 'Swear to me that thou wilt not take me by force, and I on my part will swear not to take by force thy possessions'; and he swore to her and made her swear.

And the King went up on his bed on the one side (of the chamber) and the servants made ready for her a bed on the other side. And Solomon said unto a young manservant, 'Wash out the bowl and set in it a vessel of water whilst the Queen is looking on, and shut the doors and go and sleep.' And Solomon spake to the servant in another tongue which the Queen did not understand, and he did as the King commanded, and went and slept. And the King had not as yet fallen asleep, but he only pretended to be asleep, and he was watching the Queen intently. Now the house of Solomon the King was illumined as by day, for in his wisdom he had made shining pearls which were like unto the sun, and the moon, and stars (and had set them) in the roof of his house.

And the Queen slept a little. And when she woke up her mouth was dry with thirst, for the food which Solomon had given her in his wisdom had made her thirsty, and she was very thirsty indeed, and her mouth was dry; and she moved her lips and sucked with her mouth and found no moisture. And she determined to drink the water which she had seen, and she looked at King Solomon and watched him carefully, and she thought that he was sleeping a sound sleep. But he was not asleep, and he was waiting until she should rise up to steal the water to (quench) her thirst. And she rose up and, making no sound with her feet, she went to the water in the bowl and lifted up the jar to drink the water. And Solomon seized her hand before she could drink the water, and said unto her, 'Why hast thou broken the oath that thou hast sworn that thou wouldst not take by force anything that is in my house?' And she answered and said unto him in fear, 'Is the oath broken by my drinking water?' And the King said unto her, 'Is there anything that thou hast seen under the heavens that is better than water?' And the Queen said, 'I have sinned against myself, and thou art free from (thy) oath. But let me drink water for my thirst.' Then Solomon said unto her, 'Am I perchance free from the oath which thou hast made me swear?' And the Queen said, 'Be free from thy oath, and only let me drink water.' And he permitted her to drink water, and after she had drunk water he worked his will with her and they slept together.

And after he slept there appeared unto King Solomon (in a dream) a brilliant sun, and it came down from heaven and shed exceedingly great splendour over Israel. And when it had tarried there for a time it suddenly withdrew itself, and it flew away to the country of Ethiopia, and it shone there with exceedingly great brightness for ever, for it willed to dwell there. And (the King said), 'I waited (to see) if it would come back to Israel, but it did not return. And again while I waited a light rose up in the heavens, and a Sun came down from them in the country of Judah, and it sent forth light which was very much stronger than before.' And Israel, because of the flame of that Sun entreated that Sun evilly and would not walk in the light thereof. And that Sun paid no heed to Israel, and the Israelites hated Him, and it became impossible that peace should exist between them and the Sun. And they lifted up their hands against Him with staves and knives, and they wished to extinguish that Sun. And they cast darkness upon the whole world with earthquake and thick darkness, and they imagined that that Sun would never more rise upon them. And they destroyed His light and cast themselves upon Him and they set a guard over His tomb wherein they had cast Him. And He came forth where they did not look for Him, and illumined the whole world, more especially the First Sea and the Last Sea, Ethiopia and Rôm. And He paid no heed whatsoever to Israel, and He ascended His former throne.

APPENDIX B

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1931

SPEECH

of His Majesty the Emperor Hailè Sellassié I, made before the Princes and Dignitaries, the Bishops and principal Clergy, etcetera, on the occasion of the signature of the Constitution of the Ethiopian Empire on the 9 Hamlie in the Year of Grace 1923 (16*th July* 1931).

We, who have been invested by the Confidence of God with the mission of protecting Ethiopia, have deemed that it is not sufficient to glorify the Most High, who has conferred upon Us this great honour, by mere words and to manifest Our sentiments by insignificant, transitory actions, liable to be forgotten.

Although the efforts We have made to draw up a Constitution, durable and advantageous for all, and which can be passed on to generations to come, are by no means full testimony of Our gratitude to the Most High, We have desired you to assemble in this place, at the present time, in order to set before you the work which we have prepared, the realization of which We entrust to the Almighty.

Everyone knows that laws bring the greatest benefits to mankind and that the honour and interest of everyone depend on the wisdom of the laws, while humiliation, shame, iniquity, and loss of rights arise from their absence or insufficiency.

The Almighty, Who is above all, although possessing all power to direct everything according to His sole will, has nevertheless, desired to establish the law and place all Creation in submission to it.

The man deserving of praise is one who, inspired by just sentiments, perseveres in the way of equity, and endeavours to his utmost to improve the condition, if not of all men, of, at least, the majority.

Although various reasons prevented the realization of Our design, Our efforts for several years were continually directed, amongst other things, towards drawing up a Constitution. The idea which has dominated us, bearing in mind the interests of Ethiopia and of Our beloved people, and which has been the object of Our ceaseless endeavours, is as follows:

(1) To grant a Constitution to the whole of the Ethiopian people.

(2) To secure that it be observed and maintained.

The principal provisions of this Constitution which We grant to the Ethiopian people, are the following:

(1) Ethiopia must remain united and undivided like the members of a family. The country must be subjected to a common rule by a Constitution and governed by an Emperor. The strength of this accord must be based upon community of interests, in such a way that the individual, whilst renouncing every ambition of a personal character contrary to the common weal, may understand the power of the union and the advantages he can derive from it for safeguarding his personal interests, without any surrender or prejudice to himself.

(2) The law, whether it rewards or punishes, must be applied to everyone, without exception.

(3) It may be useful to recall that in the past, the Ethiopian people, completely isolated from the rest of the world and unable to benefit by the great currents of modern civilization, were in a backward state which justified their Sovereigns in ruling over them as a good father guides his children. But the considerable progress realized in all directions by Our subjects at the present time, enables their Emperor to affirm that the grant of a Constitution is not premature and that the moment has come for them to collaborate in the heavy task which, up to the present, their Sovereigns have accomplished alone.

It is essential for the modern Ethiopian to accustom himself to the working of all the machinery of the State, and it is in this spirit that We have resolved, in order that all who are worthy may participate, to create two Chambers whose members will be appointed by provinces, with the approval of the Emperor. Decisions will be taken by these Chambers by the majority of their members and will have the force of law only after having received the consent of the Emperor.

(4) The responsible ministers will be entrusted with the duty of enforcing throughout the territory of Ethiopia, in accordance with the interests of the State and of the population, all decisions resulting from the deliberations of the Chambers, after they have received the approval of the Emperor.

(5) In order to prevent any uncertainty as to the succession to the Throne and avoid the gravest injury to Ethiopia, the right to the Im-

perial Throne is, by the present Constitution, reserved to the present dynasty.

(6) The utilitarian object of laws being the development of the progress of the people according to the surest and highest principles, such laws must draw their inspiration from scientific methods the object of which is the harmonious improvement of all things.

(7) The present Constitution has not been prepared at random and is not contrary to the customs of the country. It is inspired by and closely approaches the principles of other civilized peoples. It has been planned with the assistance of Our Princes and Dignitaries and with the collaboration of Our most enlightened subjects.

Man has the power of commencing his undertakings; it is for God alone to bring them to a successful conclusion. We hope to obtain the help of the Lord to apply this Constitution and enable Us to complete the task We have undertaken.

In conclusion, We wish to thank the Diplomatic and Consular Corps whose presence has added to the solemnity of this happy day on which We have affixed Our signature to the present Constitution of Our State.

DECREE

We, Hailè Sellassié I, Emperor of Ethiopia, having been called to the Empire by the Grace of God and by the unanimous voice of the people, and having received the Crown and the Throne legitimately by anointment according to law, are convinced that there is no better way of manifesting the gratitude which We owe to Our Creator, Who has chosen Us and granted Us His confidence, than to render Ourselves worthy of it by making every effort so that he who comes after Us may be invested with this confidence and may work in conformity with the laws according to the principles established.

Having in view the prosperity of the country, We have decided to draw up a Constitution which safeguards such prosperity based on the laws and We have the hope that this Constitution will be a source of well-being for Ethiopia, that it will contribute to the maintenance of Our Government and to the happiness and prosperity of Our well-beloved people, and that it will give satisfaction to all. Having expressed and made clear Our Will, We have accordingly decided to grant this Constitution.

The Constitution which is to serve as the basis, in the future, for the maintenance of the Ethiopian Government and of the laws which are based on it, and the means of applying such laws once resolved on, will itself set forth the necessity of the measures suitable for ensuring its maintenance in order that this Constitution of Our State may remain perpetual and immutable.

Since our accession to the Imperial Throne of Ethiopia, having received from the hands of God a high mission for the accomplishment of His destinies, We consider that it is Our duty to decree and enforce all the measures necessary for the maintenance of Our Government, for increasing the well-being of Our People and aiding their progress on the road to happiness and the civilization attained by independent and cultured nations.

We consider that the way to achieve this aim lies in the elaboration of the present Constitution, which will facilitate Government action whilst assuring the happiness of the people who will, in addition, derive from it an honour which will not fail to be reflected on future generations and will permit the Empire to enjoy the inestimable benefits of peace and security.

Animated by this noble desire, and in order to enable Our State and Our people to obtain a high place in History, We have, after Our elevation to the Imperial Throne, and in the second year of Our Reign, in the Year of Grace 1923 (A.D. 1931), unasked and of Our own free will, decreed the present State Constitution.

CONSTITUTION OF ETHIOPIA

established in the reign of
His Majesty Hailè Sellassié I

CHAPTER I

THE ETHIOPIAN EMPIRE AND THE SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE

Article 1. The territory of Ethiopia, in its entirety, is, from one end to the other, subject to the Government of His Majesty the Emperor.

All the natives of Ethiopia, subjects of the Empire, form together the Ethiopian Nation.

Article 2. The Imperial Government assures the union of the territory, of the nation and of the law of Ethiopia.

Article 3. The Law determines that the Imperial dignity shall remain perpetually attached to the line of His Majesty Hailè Sellassié I, descendant of King Sahle Sellassie, whose line descends without interruption from the dynasty of Menilik I, son of King Solomon of Jerusalem and of the Queen of Ethiopia, known as the Queen of Sheba.

Article 4. The Throne and the Crown of the Empire shall be transmitted to the descendants of the Emperor pursuant to the Law of the Imperial House.

Article 5. By virtue of His Imperial Blood, as well as by the anointing which He has received, the person of the Emperor is sacred, His dignity is inviolable and His power indisputable. Consequently, He is entitled to all the honours due to Him in accordance with tradition and the present Constitution. The Law decrees that anyone so bold as to injure the Majesty of the Emperor will be punished.

CHAPTER II

THE POWER AND PREROGATIVES OF THE EMPEROR

Article 6. In the Ethiopian Empire supreme power rests in the hands of the Emperor. He ensures the exercise thereof in conformity with the established law.

Article 7. The Emperor of Ethiopia will institute the Chamber of the Senate (Yaheg Mawossena Meker-Beth) and the Chamber of Deputies (Yaheg Mamria Meker-Beth). The laws prepared by these Chambers become executory by his promulgation.

Article 8. It is the Emperor's right to convene the deliberative Chambers and to declare the opening and the close of their sessions. He may also order their convocation before or after the usual time.

He may dissolve the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 9. When the Chambers are not sitting, the Emperor has the right, in case of necessity, in order to maintain order and avert public dangers, to promulgate decrees taking the place of laws. The Law determines that these decrees shall in due course be presented to the Chambers at their first subsequent meeting, and that they shall be abrogated for the future if the Chambers do not approve them.

Article 10. The Emperor shall give the necessary orders to ensure the execution of the laws in force, according to the letter and the spirit thereof, and for the maintenance of public order and the development of the prosperity of the nation.

Article 11. The Emperor shall lay down the organization and the regulations of all administrative departments.

It is his right also to appoint and dismiss the officers of the Army, as well as civil officials, and to decide as to their respective charges and salaries.

Article 12. The right of declaring war and of concluding peace is legally reserved to the Emperor.

Article 13. It is the Emperor's right to determine the armed forces necessary to the Empire, both in time of peace and in time of war.

Article 14. The Emperor has legally the right to negotiate and to sign all kinds of treaties.

Article 15. The Emperor has the right to confer the title of Prince and other honorific titles, to establish personal estates ("reste-guelt") to institute new Orders.

Article 16. The Emperor has the right to grant pardon, to commute penalties and to reinstate.

Article 17. If the Emperor is incapable, either owing to age or sickness, of dealing with the affairs of Government, a Regent of the Empire may be appointed, pursuant to the Law of the Imperial House, in order to exercise the supreme power on the Emperor's behalf.

CHAPTER III

THE RIGHTS RECOGNIZED BY THE EMPEROR AS BELONGING TO THE NATION, AND THE DUTIES INCUMBENT ON THE NATION

Article 18. The Law specifies the conditions required for the status of Ethiopian subjects.

Article 19. All Ethiopian subjects, provided that they comply with the conditions laid down by law and the decrees promulgated by H.M. the Emperor, may be appointed officers of the Army or civil officials, or to any other posts or offices in the service of the State.

Article 20. All those who belong to the Ethiopian Army owe absolute loyalty and obedience to the Emperor, in conformity with the provisions of the law.

Article 21. The nation is bound to pay legal taxes.

Article 22. Within the limits provided by law, Ethiopian subjects have the right to pass freely from one place to another.

Article 23. No Ethiopian subject may be arrested, sentenced or imprisoned except in pursuance of the law.

Article 24. No Ethiopian subject may, against his will, be deprived of the right to have his case tried by the legally established Court.

Article 25. Except in the cases provided by law, no domiciliary searches may be made.

Article 26. Except in the cases provided by law, no one shall have the right to violate the secrecy of the correspondence of Ethiopian subjects.

Article 27. Except in cases of public utility determined by law, no one shall be entitled to deprive an Ethiopian subject of the movable or landed property which he holds.

Article 28. All Ethiopian subjects have the right to present petitions to the Government in legal form.

Article 29. The provisions of the present Chapter shall in no way limit the measures which the Emperor, by virtue of his supreme power, may take in the event of war or of public misfortunes menacing the interests of the nation.

CHAPTER IV

THE DELIBERATIVE CHAMBERS OF THE EMPIRE

Article 30. The Deliberative Chambers of the Empire are the two following:

(*a*) the First: Chamber of the Senate: ('Yaheg Mawossena Meker-Beth').

(*b*) the Second: Chamber of Deputies: ('Yaheg Mamria Meker-Beth').

Article 31. The members of the Senate shall be appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers.

Article 32. Temporarily, and until the people are in a position to elect them themselves, the members of the Chamber of Deputies shall be chosen by the Nobility (Mekuanent) and the local Chiefs (Shumoch).

Article 33. A person who has been appointed member of the Senate may not, during the same parliamentary session become a member of the Chamber of Deputies, and a person who has been chosen as a member of the Chamber of Deputies may not during the same parliamentary session become a member of the Senate.

Article 34. No law may be put into force without having been discussed by the Chambers and having obtained the confirmation of the Emperor.

Article 35. The members of the Chamber of Deputies shall be legally bound to receive and deliberate on the proposals transmitted to them by the Ministers of the respective Departments. However, when the Deputies have an idea which could be useful to the Empire or to the nation, the law reserves to them the right to communicate it to the Emperor through their President, and the Chamber shall deliberate on the subject if the Emperor consents thereto.

Article 36. Each of the two Chambers shall have the right to express separately to His Majesty the Emperor its opinion on a legislative question or on any other matter whatsoever. If the Emperor does not accept its opinion, it may not, however, revert to the question during the same parliamentary session.

Article 37. The two Chambers shall be convened annually and shall sit for . . . . . . months. If necessary, the Emperor may cause them to sit longer.

Article 38. The Chambers shall be convened in extraordinary session, according to requirements. In this case, it is for the Emperor to fix the duration of their session.

Article 39. The opening and closing, and the duration of sessions and recesses shall be fixed identically in respect of the two Chambers. If the Chamber of Deputies is dissolved, the Senate shall adjourn its session until later.

Article 40. If the Emperor has made use of his right to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies entirely, he shall arrange for a new Chamber to be assembled within four months.

Article 41. Neither of the two Chambers shall commence its deliberations or undertake a debate or a vote without two-thirds of its members being present.

Article 42. If during the deliberations of the Chambers the votes are equally divided, the opinion of the group to which the President of the Chamber shall have adhered shall prevail.

Article 43. The President of the Chamber shall state in advance whether the question forming the subject-matter of the deliberations is public or secret in character.

If, after a matter has been declared secret, a member brings it to the knowledge of the public by speeches, by the Press, by writings or by any other means, he shall be punished in conformity with the Penal Law.

Article 44. The Emperor shall draw up, in the form of a law, the standing orders of the Senate and of the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 45. Except in cases of crime, judgement of which cannot be deferred, no member of the Chamber of Deputies may be prosecuted at law during the period of a parliamentary session.

Article 46. If after deliberating an important matter, the two Chambers come to different decisions, the Emperor, having received written statements of their respective opinions, shall examine the reasons for their disagreement. After having come to a conclusion on the matter, he shall seek a compromise capable of bringing them to a final agreement, by selecting what he considers best in the two resolutions.

In the event of its being impossible to reconcile the opinions of the two Chambers, the Emperor legally has the right either to select and promulgate the opinion of one, or to defer the question.

Article 47. The Chambers may not summon Ministers to their meetings even if they feel the need therefor, without having first obtained the consent of the Emperor. Ministers, on their part, may not attend meetings of the Chambers and take part in their deliberations without having obtained the consent of His Majesty.

CHAPTER V

THE MINISTERS OF THE EMPIRE

Article 48. Ministers shall submit in writing to His Majesty the Emperor their opinions regarding the affairs of their respective Departments; they are responsible for such opinions. Laws and decrees and all other acts emanating from the Emperor in the affairs of the Empire shall bear the Imperial signature; subsequently the Keeper of the Seals (Tsafiteezaz) shall notify them under his signature to the appropriate Minister.

Article 49. When the Emperor asks the opinion of his Ministers on an important governmental matter, they shall deliberate together in accordance with the regulations before submitting their opinion to him.

CHAPTER VI

JURISDICTION

Article 50. Judges, sitting regularly, shall administer justice in conformity with the laws, in the name of His Majesty the Emperor. The organization of the Courts shall be regulated by law.

Article 51. The Judges shall be selected from among men having experience of judicial affairs.

Article 52. Judges shall sit in public. In cases which might affect public order or prejudice good morals, the hearing may, according to law, be held *in camera.*

Article 53. The jurisdiction of each Court shall be fixed by law.

Article 54. Special Courts shall judge all suits relating to administrative affairs, which are withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the other Courts.

CHAPTER VII

THE BUDGET OF THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT

Article 55. The law determines that the receipts of the Government Treasury, of whatever nature they may be, shall only be expended in conformity with the annual budget fixing the sums placed at the disposal of each Ministry. The annual budget shall be framed on the basis proposed by the Minister of Finance during the deliberations of the Chamber of Deputies and of the Senate, whose resolutions shall be submitted to the approval of His Majesty the Emperor.

Done at Addis Ababa, on the 9 Hamlie
in the Year of Grace 1923 (16th July 1931).

APPENDIX C

MR. EDEN'S STATEMENT OF 4th FEBRUARY 1941

Statement made by Mr. Eden, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in the House of Commons, 4th February 1941[1]

His Majesty's Government would welcome the reappearance of an independent Ethiopian State and recognize the claim of the Emperor Haile Selassié to the throne. The Emperor has intimated to His Majesty's Government that he will need outside assistance and guidance. His Majesty's Government agree with this view and consider that any such assistance and guidance in economic and political matters should be the subject of international arrangement at the conclusion of peace. They reaffirm that they have themselves no territorial ambitions in Abyssinia. In the meanwhile the conduct of military operations by Imperial forces in parts of Abyssinia will require temporary measures of military guidance and control. These will be carried out in consultation with the Emperor, and will be brought to an end as soon as the situation permits.

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[1] H. of C. Debates, 4 February 1941, Col. 804.

APPENDIX D

THE ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN AGREEMENT OF 31st JANUARY 1942

AGREEMENT AND MILITARY CONVENTION BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ETHIOPIA

[Ethiopia No. 1. Cmd. 6334, 1942],

Addis Ababa, 31st of January 1942

AGREEMENT BETWEEN HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE EMPEROR OF ETHIOPIA

Whereas His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God (hereinafter referred to as His Majesty the Emperor), wishes to put on record His gratitude and that of His people for the overwhelming and generous aid He has received from the Forces of His Majesty The King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India (hereinafter referred to as His Majesty The King), which has enabled Him and His people to recover their national territory; and

Whereas His Majesty the Emperor, true to His coronation pledges not to surrender His sovereignty or the independence of His people, but conscious of the needs of His country, has intimated to the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (hereinafter referred to as the Government of the United Kingdom) that He is eager to receive advice and financial assistance in the difficult task of reconstruction and reform; and

Whereas the Government of the United Kingdom recognize that

Ethiopia is now a free and independent State and His Majesty the Emperor, Hailé Sellassié I, is its lawful Ruler, and, the reconquest of Ethiopia being now complete, wish to help His Majesty the Emperor to re-establish His Government and to assist in providing for the immediate needs of the country:

Now, therefore, His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia in person, and Major-General Sir Philip Euen Mitchell, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, upon whom has been conferred the decoration of the Military Cross, Chief Political Officer, on the Staff of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, East Africa, being duly authorized for this purpose by the Government of the United Kingdom,

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE 1

Diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and Ethiopia shall be re-established and conducted through a British Minister Plenipotentiary accredited to His Majesty the Emperor and an Ethiopian Minister Plenipotentiary accredited to His Majesty The King, who shall be appointed as soon as possible after the entry into force of this Agreement. His Majesty the Emperor agrees that the Diplomatic Representative of His Majesty The King shall take precedence over any other foreign Representative accredited to His Imperial Majesty.

ARTICLE 2

(*a*) His Majesty the Emperor having requested the Government of the United Kingdom to assist him in obtaining the services of British subjects (i) as advisers to himself and his administration; (ii) as Commissioner of Police, Police officers and inspectors; and (iii) as judges and magistrates, the Government of the United Kingdom will use their best endeavours to assist His Majesty the Emperor in this matter. The number of such British subjects, their salaries, privileges, duties and powers, and the appointments they are to fill, shall be the subject of separate agreements between the Contracting Parties.

(*b*) His Majesty the Emperor agrees not to appoint advisers additional to those referred to in paragraph (*a*) above except after consultation with the Government of the United Kingdom.

ARTICLE 3

Subject to the provisions of the Military Convention concluded this day, and of Article 7 of this Agreement, the jurisdiction and administration exercised by British military tribunals and authorities shall terminate as soon as they can be replaced by effective Ethiopian civilian administration and jurisdiction, which His Majesty the Emperor will set up as soon as possible. Nevertheless, British military tribunals shall finish any cases then pending before them. The Ethiopian authorities will recognize and, where necessary, enforce decisions previously given by British military tribunals.

ARTICLE 4

(*a*) His Majesty the Emperor, having intimated to the Government of the United Kingdom that he will require financial aid in order to re-establish his administration, the Government of the United Kingdom will grant to His Majesty the sum of Pounds Sterling one million five hundred thousand during the first year and Pounds Sterling one million during the second year of the currency of this Agreement. If this Agreement remains in force for a third year, the Government of the United Kingdom agree to pay to His Majesty the Emperor the sum of Pounds Sterling five hundred thousand in respect of such third year, and if for a fourth year, then the sum of Pounds Sterling two hundred and fifty thousand shall be paid in respect of that year. Payments will be made in quarterly instalments in advance.

(*b*) His Majesty the Emperor agrees for his part that this grant shall absolve the Government of the United Kingdom from any payments in respect of the use of immovable property of the Ethiopian State which may be required by the British forces in Ethiopia during the war.

(*c*) His Majesty the Emperor agrees that there shall be the closest co-operation between the Ethiopian authorities and his British Advisers, to be appointed in accordance with Article 2 (*a*), regarding public expenditure.

(*d*) In order to facilitate the absorption into Ethiopian economy of the funds to be provided under paragraph (*a*) above, and to promote the early resumption of trade between Ethiopia and the surrounding territories, His Majesty the Emperor agrees that in all matters relating to currency in Ethiopia the Government of the United Kingdom shall be consulted and that arrangements concerning it shall be made only with the concurrence of that Government.

ARTICLE 5

(*a*) Jurisdiction over foreigners shall be exercised by the Ethiopian Courts constituted according to the draft Statute attached hereto as an Annex, which His Majesty the Emperor will promulgate forthwith and will maintain in force during the continuance of this Agreement, except in so far as it may require amendment in any manner agreed upon by the parties to this Agreement.

(*b*) Any foreigner who is a party to any proceedings, civil or criminal, within the jurisdiction of a Regional, Communal or Provincial Court, may elect to have the case transferred without additional fee or charge to the High Court for trial. Provisions to this effect shall be included in the Rules of Court.

(*c*) In the hearing by the High Court of any matter to which a foreigner is a party at least one of the British Judges mentioned in Article 2 (*a*) shall sit as a member of the Court.

(*d*) His Majesty the Emperor agrees to direct that foreigners shall be incarcerated only in prisons approved for the purpose by the Commissioner of Police appointed in accordance with Article 2 (*a*).

ARTICLE 6

(*a*) His Majesty the Emperor agrees to enact laws against trading with the enemy in terms proposed to him by the Government of the United Kingdom.

(*b*) His Majesty the Emperor accepts full responsibility for seeing that private enemy property is dealt with in accordance with international law. His Majesty agrees to consult with the British Diplomatic Representative as to the measures to be taken to this end.

ARTICLE 7

His Majesty the Emperor agrees:

(*a*) That all prisoners of war shall be handed over to the custody of the British Military Authorities, who will evacuate them from Ethiopia as soon as possible, and

(*b*) That he will enact such legislation as may be required to enable the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief the British forces in East Africa and officers acting under his authority to exercise such temporary local powers as may be necessary for the administration, control and evacuation of Italian civilians in Ethiopia.

ARTICLE 8

The Government of the United Kingdom will use their best endeavours:

(*a*) To secure the return of Ethiopians in Italian hands, and

(*b*) To secure the return of artistic works, religious property and the like removed to Italy and belonging to His Majesty the Emperor, the Ethiopian State, or local or religious bodies.

ARTICLE 9

In areas in which the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief the British forces in East Africa may find it necessary to conduct military operations against the common enemy in future, His Majesty the Emperor will, at the request of the said General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, declare a state of emergency and will confer on the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief the powers resulting from such declaration. Any legislation necessary to secure these powers will be promulgated by His Majesty the Emperor. The Ethiopian Government and local authorities will give such aid and concurrence to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief as may be needed.

ARTICLE 10

His Majesty the Emperor agrees not to conduct any external military operation which, in the opinion of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief the British forces in East Africa is contrary to the joint interests of Ethiopia and the United Kingdom.

ARTICLE 11

(*a*) His Majesty the Emperor will accord freedom of passage to, in and over Ethiopia to duly registered British civil aircraft, provided that such regulations governing air navigation as may be in force in Ethiopia are observed.

(*b*) His Majesty the Emperor will permit a British Air Transport organization or organizations, to be designated by the Government of the United Kingdom, to operate regular Air Services to, in and over Ethiopia for the carriage of passengers, mails and freight. For this purpose the said organizations shall be permitted to use such aerodromes, ground equipment and facilities as are available, and to provide such other aerodromes, ground equipment and facilities as may be necessary.

(*c*) His Majesty the Emperor will not permit foreign aircraft other than British to fly to, in or over Ethiopia without the concurrence of the Government of the United Kingdom.

ARTICLE 12

The present Agreement shall enter in force as from this day's date. It shall remain in force until replaced by a Treaty for which His Majesty the Emperor may wish to make proposals. If it is not so replaced within two years from this date, it may thereafter be terminated at any time by either Party giving three months' notice to the other to this effect.

In witness whereof the undersigned have signed the present Agreement and affixed thereto their seals.

Done this thirty-first day of January 1942 in the English and Amharic languages, both of which shall be equally authoritative except in case of doubt, when the English text shall prevail.

(L.S.) HAILÉ SELLASSIÉ I (L.S.) P. E. MITCHELL

ANNEX

DRAFT ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE PROCLAMATION

Part I.—*Preliminary*

1. This Proclamation may be cited as the Administration of Justice Proclamation.

2. The following Courts shall be established in Our Empire and shall be constituted in the manner hereinafter described and shall exercise the powers conferred on them by this Proclamation over all persons in Ethiopia:

(*a*) The Supreme Imperial Court.
(*b*) The High Court.
(*c*) The Provincial Courts.
(*d*) Regional and Communal Courts.

Part II.—*The Supreme Imperial Court*

3. The Supreme Imperial Court shall comprise the Afa Negus as President, together with two judges of the High Court, who shall be nominated by the President of the High Court for the hearing of any appeal from the High Court. No judge shall be nominated by the President of the High Court to hear any appeal in any case upon which he adjudicated as a member of the High Court. When in any matter the members of the Supreme Imperial Court are not unanimous, the opinion of the majority shall prevail.

Part III.—*The High Court*

4. The High Court of Ethiopia shall comprise such number of judges as We may from time to time think necessary, of whom one shall be designated the President. The High Court shall contain such number of judges of British nationality as We shall consider to be desirable.

5. No person shall be appointed by Us to the office of Judge of Our High Court unless he is a regularly qualified legal practitioner or is certified to Us by Our Minister of Justice to be qualified for such office by reason of long judicial experience or sound knowledge of law.

6. We may also appoint from time to time fit persons as additional judges of the High Court for the trial of particular cases or for a specified period or while holding any specified office.

7. The High Court shall have full criminal and civil jurisdiction in Ethiopia according to law.

8. The High Court shall be deemed to be fully constituted for the hearing of any matter when it comprises three judges, and where in any matter the members of the Court are not unanimous, the opinion of the majority shall prevail.

9. The High Court may sit at any place within Our Empire as may be convenient for the dispatch of business.

10. An appeal shall lie to the Supreme Imperial Court from any decision of the High Court when acting as a court of first instance, in the manner laid down in Rules of Court.

11. No sentence of death shall be carried into execution unless confirmed by Us.

Part IV.—*Provincial Courts*

12. In each of the Provinces of Our Empire there shall be established a Provincial Court, which shall comprise such number of provincial

judges appointed by Us as We may from time to time think necessary. One judge of each Provincial Court shall be designated the President.

13. We may also appoint from time to time fit persons as additional provincial judges for the trial of particular cases or for a specified period or while holding any specified office.

14. A Provincial Court shall be deemed to be fully constituted for the hearing of any matter when it comprises three members and where in regard to any matter the members of the Court are not unanimous, the opinion of the majority shall prevail.

15. A Provincial Court may sit at any place within the Province for which it is constituted as may be convenient for the dispatch of business.

16. (1) The jurisdiction of a Provincial Court in its original jurisdiction shall be limited:

(*a*) In criminal matters to:

- (i) imprisonment not exceeding 5 years.
- (ii) fine not exceeding 2,000 M.T. dollars.
- (iii) corporal punishment not exceeding 20 lashes, and shall extend to any combination of the above punishments.

(*b*) In civil matters, to cases, the subject matter of which does not exceed 2,000 M.T. dollars.

(2) A Provincial Court shall have such jurisdiction to hear appeals from Courts established under Article 18 of the Proclamation as may be prescribed by the warrant of any such court and any decision of a Provincial Court on appeal shall be final.

17. An appeal shall lie from any Provincial Court as a Court of First Instance to the High Court in the manner laid down by Rules of Court and any decision of the High Court on such appeal shall be final.

Part V.—*Regional and Communal Courts*

18. Notwithstanding the jurisdiction of the High Court and the Provincial Courts it shall be lawful for Us to establish by warrant under Our hand other courts of criminal and civil jurisdiction which shall be subordinate to the Provincial Courts. Such warrant shall define the Constitution of the Court, the area within which the court exercises jurisdiction, the law to be administered and shall impose such limitations upon the jurisdiction and powers of the court as may appear necessary. Appeals shall lie from courts established under this article to such court or courts as may be specified in the warrant establishing a Court.

Part VI.—*Assessors*

19. Any Court constituted under this Proclamation may, if it sees fit, sit with two or more suitable persons in the capacity of Assessors. Assessors shall be entitled to put any relevant question to any witness and, at the conclusion of the case, shall give their opinions on the facts in issue, but the Court shall not be bound by the opinions of the Assessors.

Part VII.—*Rules of Court*

20. Rules of Court may be made, with the approval of Our Minister of Justice, by the Afa Negus in respect of the Supreme Imperial Court and by the President of the High Court in respect of any other Courts established by this Proclamation for the purposes of:

(*a*) Regulating the administration of the Court, and the institution, conduct and hearing of proceedings therein.
(*b*) Regulating the admission, conduct and discipline of legal practitioners.
(*c*) Regulating the selection and duties of assessors.
(*d*) Regulating the committal of criminal cases from lower courts to higher courts.
(*e*) Regulating the imposition and recovery of fines, the award of imprisonment in default of payment and the procedure relating to execution and attachment.
(*f*) Prescribing forms.
(*g*) Fixing fees.
(*h*) Regulating the general administration of justice.

Part VIII.—*General*

21. For the better examination of laws submitted to Us for enactment there is hereby established a Consultative Committee for legislation, which shall comprise Our Judicial Adviser, the President of the High Court, and three persons having recognized legal qualifications or being qualified by reason of long judicial experience and sound knowledge of law to be especially appointed by Us. The duty of such Committee shall be to draft laws upon Our directions or to review the draft of any proposed law. No law shall be submitted to Us for enactment unless it is accompanied by a certificate signed by a majority of the members of the said Committee certifying that the law to which the certificate relates

is not repugnant to natural justice and humanity and is a fit and proper law to be applied without discrimination to Ethiopians and foreigners alike.

22. When any law has been enacted by Us it shall be published in the *Official Gazette* of Ethiopia in the Amharic and English languages, and shall come into force from the date of publication in the *Gazette* or from any other date which may be specified in the law.

23. Nothing contained in this Proclamation shall prevent the hearing and settlement of minor disputes in any manner traditionally recognized by Ethiopian law until such time as regular courts can be established for the hearing of such disputes by judges duly appointed by Us on the recommendation of Our Minister of Justice.

24. It is hereby declared that no court shall give effect to any existing law which is contrary to natural justice or humanity, or which makes any harsh or inequitable differentiation between Our subjects and foreigners.

APPENDIX E

THE ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN AGREEMENT OF 19th DECEMBER 1944

AGREEMENT BETWEEN HIS MAJESTY IN RESPECT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY THE EMPEROR OF ETHIOPIA

[Ethiopia No. 1. Cmd. 6584, 1945]

Addis Ababa, 19th December 1944

His Majesty the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India (hereinafter referred to as His Majesty the King), and His Imperial Majesty The Emperor of Ethiopia, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God (hereinafter referred to as His Imperial Majesty the Emperor),

Whereas, on the 31st January 1942, an Agreement and a Military Convention were signed at Addis Ababa between His Majesty the Emperor and the Government of His Majesty the King in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with the provision that they should remain in force until replaced by a treaty for which His Imperial Majesty the Emperor might wish to make proposals;

Considering that circumstances have changed since the said Agreement and Convention were concluded, but that while the war continues it is not opportune to negotiate a permanent treaty;

Desiring, as members of the United Nations, to render mutual assistance to the cause of the United Nations and to conclude a new temporary Agreement for the regulation of their mutual relations:

Have accordingly appointed as their plenipotentiaries:

His Imperial Majesty The Emperor:

His Excellency Bitweddad Makonnen Endalkachau, The Prime Minister;

His Majesty The King: For the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

The Right Honourable Earl De La Warr, a Member of the Privy Council;

who, having exchanged their full powers, found to be in due and proper form, have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE 1

The Agreement and the Military Convention concluded on the 31st January 1942, are superseded by the present Agreement.

ARTICLE 2

Diplomatic relations between the High Contracting Parties shall be conducted through an Ethiopian Minister Plenipotentiary in London accredited to His Majesty the King and a British Minister Plenipotentiary in Addis Ababa accredited to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor.

ARTICLE 3

1. The Imperial Ethiopian Government will retain or appoint British or other foreign persons of experience and special qualifications to be advisers or officers of their administration and judges as they find necessary.

2. The Government of the United Kingdom will assist The Imperial Ethiopian Government in finding suitable persons of British nationality whom they may desire to appoint.

ARTICLE 4

1. Jurisdiction over British subjects, British Protected Persons and British Companies shall be exercised by the Ethiopian Courts constituted according to the Statute for the Administration of Justice issued by His Imperial Majesty the Emperor in 1942 and the Rules of Court issued in 1943, provided (*a*) that in Article 4 of Section III of the Statute there

shall be substituted for 'judges of British nationality' the words 'judges of proven judicial experience in other lands', and (*b*) that, in the hearing by the High Court of any matter, all persons shall have the right to demand that one of the judges sitting shall have had judicial experience in other lands.

2. British subjects and British Protected Persons shall be incarcerated only in prisons which are approved by an officer who has had experience in modern prison administration.

ARTICLE 5

1. The Government of the United Kingdom will (*a*) relinquish the control and management of the section of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway which lies in Ethiopian territory within three months of receiving from the Imperial Ethiopian Government a formal assurance that satisfactory arrangements have been made for its continued efficient operation, and (*b*) transfer the control and management of the section of the Railway referred to in (*a*) above to the organization specified in the formal assurance.

2. The Imperial Ethiopian Government recognize that the maintenance of the Railway in efficient operation is an essential part of the war effort, and also agree that any traffic for which priority is in future requested by the Middle East Supply Centre or by the British Military Authorities will receive that priority.

3. The Imperial Ethiopian Government, in making arrangements for the operation and management of the Railway, undertake that these arrangements will not be such as to prejudice the legal rights of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway Company.

4. The Government of the United Kingdom will also, before the conclusion of the period specified in paragraph 1 above, withdraw from the cantonment of Diredawa and the area north-west of the Railway formerly included in the area defined in paragraph 1 of the Schedule to the Anglo-Ethiopian Military Convention, 1942.

ARTICLE 6

1. The Government of the United Kingdom will make available to the Imperial Ethiopian Government a military mission which shall be a unit of the military forces of His Majesty the King under the command of the Head of the Mission. It shall be called 'The British Military Mission to Ethiopia'.

2. The status and privileges of the members of the military mission will be governed by the terms of the annexure to the present Article.

3. The Head of the Mission shall be responsible to the Minister of War of the Imperial Ethiopian Government for the organization, training and administration of the Ethiopian Army.

4. The policy governing such organization, training and administration shall be laid down by the Minister of War of the Imperial Ethiopian Government in consultation with the Head of the Mission. The Minister shall have the right to satisfy himself that the policy so laid down is being executed.

5. The Minister of War of the Imperial Ethiopian Government and the Head of the British Military Mission to Ethiopia shall agree as to the general disposition and movement of the members of the mission, as well as the strength of the mission.

6. The British Military Mission shall be withdrawn during the currency of this agreement if, after consultation between the High Contracting Parties, either of them so desires and gives notice to the other to this effect. If any such notice is given the Mission shall be withdrawn three months after the date of receipt of notice.

ARTICLE 7

In order as an Ally to contribute to the effective prosecution of the war, and without prejudice to their underlying sovereignty, the Imperial Ethiopian Government hereby agree that, for the duration of this Agreement, the territories designated as the Reserved Area and the Ogaden, as set forth in the attached schedule, shall be under British Military Administration.

ARTICLE 8

[Deals with Ethiopian Government title to installations under Military Agreement.]

ARTICLE 9

[Deals with:

1. Mutual freedom of air passage.
2. Permission for British Air Transport organization to operate services to and over Ethiopia and the provision and use of facilities for landing, etc.
3. These terms to be governed by future international agreements.
4. Facilities in Ethiopia for British and allied Air Forces.]

ARTICLE 10

[Deals with collaboration with regard to enemy aliens.]

ARTICLE 11

[Deals with apprehension of deserters.]

ARTICLE 12

The present Agreement shall enter into force as from to-day's date.

ARTICLE 13

The present Agreement shall remain in force until replaced by a treaty between the two High Contracting Parties; provided, however, that, at any time after the expiry of two years from the coming into force of this Agreement, either of the High Contracting Parties may give notice to the other of his desire to terminate it. If such notice is given the Agreement shall terminate three months after the date on which this notice is given.

In witness whereof the undersigned have subscribed their signatures to the present Agreement and thereunto affixed their seals.

Done at Addis Ababa, this nineteenth day of December 1944, in duplicate in the English and Amharic languages, both of which shall be equally authoritative, except in case of doubt when the English text shall prevail.

(L.S.) DE LA WARR
(L.S.) MAKONNEN ENDALKACHAU

APPENDIX F

A SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER ON ETHIOPIA'S CLAIMS TO THE EX-ITALIAN COLONIES

This book has been directed almost wholly to an examination of the institutions which together form the Ethiopian Government. There was good reason for this. Ethiopia is now well known on the international stage, but she passes across it as a two-dimensional figure, and the world, unable to discover what depth in terms of domestic realities lies behind that flat if picturesque surface, may be misled into expecting of her either far too much or far too little. The external position of this country in world affairs, with the history of its diplomacy, its international status, its wars and relationships with neighbouring governments during the last twenty-five years or so, lies outside the limits of this study and, indeed, makes up a subject which demands a book to itself. Its writing would not encounter the difficulties which have confronted this study of internal affairs; the documentation is voluminous and, by comparison, exact, and a great deal has already been written in description and commentary as year by year the eventful story of Ethiopia's foreign relations unfolded itself.[1] Ethiopian foreign affairs are of great interest to Britain, while very important decisions have to be taken by the 'Big Four' by February 1948 about the ex-Italian colonies conquered by British arms. It seemed, therefore, that in the absence of such a book a supplementary chapter reviewing Ethiopia's boundary claims and her general prospects in this matter might be of use to readers of this book.

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[1] For some recent material see the official claims in the Ethiopian Government's *Memoranda*, already cited. Ethiopian claims have been the main content of the *New Times* during 1945–6, and although this paper is mainly concerned with the advocacy of Ethiopia's claims, some useful documents are reproduced in it. See also *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somaliland* by N. Bentwich (no date, but apparently 1945), and for another very authoritative discussion of the question Brigadier Longrigg's book already cited, and his address to the Royal Empire Society, given in *East Africa and Rhodesia*, 6 and 20 June 1946. See also the correspondence in *The Times* during March 1946.

The reader should, however, be warned. This book has been written for the most part under the discipline of the historian. This supplementary section will require some excursions into political, current, and highly controversial issues in which, from their nature, the writer's opinion is even more open to challenge than in the preceding chapters.

Ethiopia claims to be an empire and there is, indeed, a strong imperialist theme running through her history. Her earliest records are those of the far-ranging military adventures of Aksum. Grandiose ideas of the status of Ethiopia were incorporated in the mythology of the *Kebra Nagast*, where Ethiopians have been able to read for centuries that they are a people chosen by God to inherit all the promises the Jews had forfeited and that only Rome and Ethiopia were of account in the world.[1] The first fifteen centuries of this era were occupied with a gradual expansion from north to south. Checked for some three and a half centuries by Galla and Muslim pressure, the Shoan kings resumed the southward expansion in the nineteenth century. Theodore, in his megalomania, declared that he wished to conquer the whole earth. John made considerable claims. Menelik, in a circular drawn up in 1891 for the foreign powers, wrote: 'I shall endeavour, should God of His grace grant me the years and the strength, to restore the ancient frontiers of Ethiopia as far as Khartoum and to Lake Nyanza beyond the lands of the Galla.'[2] The word 'restore' used of Khartoum may apply to a raid from Aksum to the Blue Nile about A.D. 75–350, with perhaps another in the sixth century. As for Nyanza, it is doubtful whether by 1891 any Ethiopian had reached a point nearer to the lake than 300 miles.

The present Emperor has taken up the expansionist policy, and his government is now claiming both the whole of the modern Eritrea and also Italian Somaliland as 'lost provinces' upon grounds that do some violence to history and take insufficient account of present political and religious facts. The claim is based, in the official document, upon some rather indefinite references to early history and migrations, almost every sentence of which cries out for comment or correction.[1] The main implication is that Ethiopia lost her control of the Red Sea coastlands only at the time of the European annexations of the late nineteenth century.

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[1] 'Concerning the Division of the Earth. From the middle of Jerusalem, and from the north thereof to the south-east is the portion of the Emperor of Rôm; and from the middle of Jerusalem from the north thereof to the south and to Western India is the portion of the Emperor of Ethiopia. For both of them are of the seed of Shem, the son of Noah, the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, the children of Solomon.' (The implication is that the rest were the offspring of Cain.) Budge, E. A. Wallis, *The Queen of Sheba and Her Only Son, Menyelek*, 1932, p. 16.

[2] Jones and Monroe, p. 142.

The evidence of history as summarized in the first three chapters does not bear this out, though admittedly the story is long, complex, and obscure. Undoubtedly Ethiopia exercised an overlordship over much of the horn of Africa in the early middle ages, though even then her control was not unbroken, and it is most improbable that a kingdom struggling to assert itself in the northern mountains against local Hamitic groups was able to exercise any continuous or effective government or impose her culture over the vast, distant, surrounding lowlands. This would be true even though, not without interruptions, she kept her outlet through the ports and as the leading power in this part of the continent exacted from time to time a tribute from surrounding princes. There is evidence to show how little the tribes of even the nearer coastlands had been brought under her control. There is, indeed, every contrast, human and physical, to divide these regions. The religious difference has only served to accentuate all the other differences which have always hindered Ethiopia's attempts to make these surrounding lands her own. They are not only held by Islam against her Christianity, they are also lowlands to her mountains, burning hot to her coolness, semi-desert to her verdure, and scant, nomads' pasture to her rich agriculture.

It is important to remember this natural divorce between Ethiopia and the coastal plains since maps which show neither contours, religion, race, nor language strongly suggest a natural unity for this region. The uncongeniality of the lower altitudes to Ethiopians is a reiterated theme throughout all her history. From the middle ages the records of expeditions are full of complaints of the heat or the fever endured by the soldiers causing heavy loss of life, as for instance in the expedition which went out to meet Marchand on the Nile. This leads Rey, who knew the country well, to conclude that while jealous of their independence, the Ethiopians 'do not themselves desire to overrun their boundaries for they are a race of highlanders, neither liking nor thriving in the lowlands'. He adds that 'so far from constituting a danger to surrounding countries, it would appear that they are confined to their island mountains by the forces of Nature'.[2] This and other evidence does not prove that the Ethiopians might not in time, with the modern alleviations possible in the hot regions, adapt themselves to the conditions. It does show, however, as far as regards historical claims, that the boundaries of their cultural influence and of their permanent occupation can be traced approximately along a line of altitude.

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[1] *Ethiopian Memoranda* (1945), pp. 5 ff.

[2] Rey, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

The word empire must therefore be applied to the position of Ethiopia in medieval Africa with reservations. The rise of Islam meant a serious challenge to her authority, and it is certain that during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries she lost such control as she exercised over most of the surrounding lowlands. By the fourteenth century she was fighting upon equal and often losing terms with powerful Muslim kingdoms on the very borders of Shoa. After losing it in the eighth century she revived her hold over Massawa, where the mountains most nearly approach the sea, and kept her access to it by uneasy arrangement with the coastal Muslims. But in the middle of the sixteenth century, about the time that Britain lost Calais, the great new Muslim invasion which swept over the whole of Ethiopia finally took Massawa and the other coasts from her. From then onwards she lost control of her outlets to the sea except so far as she could reach it by co-operation with Muslim chiefs and traders who profited from her commerce. Bruce, Salt, Krapf, Plowden, and Rassam at their different periods all bear witness to this.[1] Thus the European annexation of the lawless coastlands in the late nineteenth century instead of suffocating Ethiopia, as the official case suggests, made possible, thanks to orderly conditions, railways and modern ports, a larger and more expeditious trade with the outside world than she had ever known.

The claim to the whole of Eritrea as a 'lost province' needs much qualification. The modern Eritrea is an artificial unit, the boundaries of which were traced on the map by the Italian sword in the late nineteenth century. Of that unit the only part that Ethiopia can claim both on the grounds that it was lost at that time to Italy and also that it is by history, culture, and religion one with the Ethiopian nation is the Christian, Tigrinya-speaking interior highland region in the south. This is really the old northern province of the *Bahr-nagash* lying beyond the ancient and often disaffected kingdom of Tigré, to which after the eighteenth century it was generally subordinate. Ethiopia can, indeed, claim that this region, the most fertile and populous of Eritrea, was the cradle of her power and culture and contains some of her oldest Aksumite relics and famous monasteries which are still centres of Ethiopian Christianity.

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[1] Plowden, who knew Northern Ethiopia well, stated that it did not reach within quite 100 miles of the coast, which was dominated by unruly tribes. The Turks claimed the coastal strip, but did not administer it, though they held Massawa. Hotten, pp. 119, 123, 170–4.

This could, of course, be put another way. The Tigrinya-speaking people of the Eritrean plateau are more directly bound to those of the Tigré province than to Ethiopia as a whole. This part of Ethiopia has, indeed, been aptly called 'the vassal state of a vassal state'.[1] This whole northern block has a unity which was shown as often against Ethiopia as with her. There is much intermarriage along the frontier and some grazing movement across it, while the richer Tigré cultivation helps out the food supply of the drier Eritrean districts. The Italians after the conquest of Ethiopia, in their desire to weaken the tradition of Ethiopian unity, played upon the old and natural separatism by splitting off (as Map 2 will show), all the Tigrinya-speaking block of northern Ethiopia and throwing it in with Eritrea to make a greater Eritrean province.

The Eritrean districts which clearly by race, religion, and history belong to this block are Hamasien, Serae, and Achele Guzai.[2] There appears to be a small debatable margin around Keren where some people formerly of Ethiopian culture and Christian religion have been assimilated to the surrounding Islam, and another dubious strip along the hills between Achele Guzai and Massawa. But these represent a small margin of difference; the main division between Muslim and Tigrinya-speaking Copts, which may be taken to cut Eritrea's population of 800,000 roughly in half, is clear. The Kunama and Baria pagan negro groups north of the Setit river present a problem. It would seem wrong, in view of the past ill-treatment of negroes by Ethiopians, to allot her another negro group. Yet the Sudanese and Egyptians were equally oppressors and enslavers of the negro. It would be interesting in view of the probable ultimate withdrawal of the British element in the Sudan Government to endeavour to discover from these tribes which of the rather unpromising destinies before them they would prefer.

It may be noted here that the Ethiopian claims to Eritrea based on the so-called Hewitt Treaty of 1884 seem to have been advanced rather too confidently by Ethiopians.[3] A careful examination of the treaty and of its historical context discounts the view that it supports a claim to the modern Eritrea, which did not then exist. Indeed, not many years before, the Bogos of Keren, left defenceless between harrying Turks and Ethiopians, had pleaded for a British protectorate.[4]

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[1] I am much indebted here to an unpublished report of the British Military Administration in Eritrea upon the races, languages, etc., of the frontier region. It is by Dr. S. F. Nadel.

[2] See map no. 2.

[3] See above, pp. 53–4.

[4] *Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1846–68*. Presented to the House of Commons, 1868, p. 841. Also pp. 124–5, where it reported of the Bilein-speaking people on the then Ethiopian-Turkish frontier (much farther south

The Eritrean question has played its part in the international peace conferences of 1945–6. Like Italian Somaliland and the Ogaden it has been under British military administration, a régime obliged to work within the limits of international law, since the conquest of the territories in 1941 by British Commonwealth armies. We may notice that in spite of very abnormal economic conditions introduced by Italy and the natural poverty of Eritrea, the British military administration in its third year managed, unlike their Italian predecessors, to make the government self-supporting, though only upon a care-and-maintenance basis.[1]

The subject of the Italian colonies appears to have been first seriously discussed at the Foreign Ministers' Conference during the late summer of 1945. The Emperor at this time protested against being asked to submit his views on the question by correspondence, and demanded the right to send delegates to speak at a conference. He did, however, issue a statement of his claims to Eritrea and Italian Somaliland in a collection of memoranda to which several references have been made.[2]

In these memoranda the Ethiopian Government put forward their historical claims to Eritrea in a statement, parts of which certainly demand some qualification. A strong plea was made on grounds of defence, economics, and communications for access to the sea. Trade figures were given to support these claims. A report was included upon Ethiopian finance in order to show the country's capacity to undertake these new responsibilities. A claim for damages against Italy of £184,746,000 was scheduled, and lists of some 2,000 names of Eritreans who held some kind of government employment in Ethiopia, or who had joined her side in the fighting, were given. At a somewhat later date very detailed and interesting plans and financial estimates for the administration of Eritrea were put forward.

During September the Foreign Ministers discussed the rather startling proposal of Russia that she should be made trustee under the United

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than the present northern Eritrean frontier). 'The Abyssinian armies regularly ravage and slay their weaker brethren who are consequently beginning to hate the name of Christianity, which they see only accompanied by fire and sword.' This large collection of official papers contains much evidence about the position in this region at this date. See also Hertslet, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 422–3, for the 1884 treaty. Also Longrigg, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 168–75.

[1] Longrigg, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

[2] Under the short heading of *Ethiopian Memoranda* (1945). It has not been thought necessary to give references to all the newspaper reports upon which this chapter is based. These were mainly from the *Times* and *Hansard* of the current dates. Fuller reports of Ethiopian and other speeches, etc., will be found in the *New Times* and *Herald.*

Nations for Tripolitania, while the United States proposed direct international administration for the ex-Italian colonies. France, apparently unwilling to see any new power established on the Mediterranean, put forward, when she came to the table, the suggestion that Italy should be made trustee for her own lost colonies.

It need hardly be said that there was considerable anxiety and indignation in Ethiopia at these two last proposals. On the 8th of March 1946 the *Times* published a letter (dated 12th of February) from the Ethiopian Prime Minister reiterating his claims for the 'lost provinces' of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, which the Ethiopians generally call Benadir. The writer of this book felt obliged to protest against some of the terms in which the letter was written, especially the misleading pathos which, by implication, ascribed to Muslim nomads of northern Eritrea and the Somali coast a longing 'to return to their homeland, after fifty years of steadfast loyalty to the Emperor. . . .' A correspondence upon the subject developed. Meanwhile a vigorous propaganda campaign was organized in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Demonstrations were staged and photographed and literature supporting the return of the 'lost provinces to their motherland' was distributed.

In the early spring of 1946 the question of the Italian colonies was again taken up by the Foreign Ministers. On the 29th of April Mr. Bevin put forward some proposals which he elaborated in Parliament on the 4th of June. His suggestion for a British trusteeship for a united Somalia will be considered presently. Of Eritrea he said: 'I should also like to see some arrangement whereby the greater part of Eritrea is awarded to Ethiopia. Eritrea is entirely an artificial entity. It cannot, as I see it, stand by itself, but only under some system of trusteeship.'[1]

The Emperor was quick to reply. In the same month he sent in a statement to the Foreign Secretaries in which he made the following points:[2]

(i) Eritrea had been joined with Ethiopia as her oldest province for 3,000 years. (These were confident and definite terms in which to describe the historically nebulous conditions of 1000 B.C.)

(ii) Eritrea cannot live economically in separation from Ethiopia and may be a financial liability to her rulers.

(iii) How would a ten-year trusteeship advance the interests of Eritrea? How would the capital for its development be provided?

(iv) The restoration of Italian power in the form of a trusteeship was abhorrent to Ethiopia. Would the United Nations maintain forces to protect her? Was Ethiopia to concentrate the funds she required for welfare upon armaments?

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[1] *H. of C. Debates*, 4 June 1947, col. 1841.

[2] *New Times*, 16 June 1946.

The impossibility of obtaining agreement upon these issues led the Foreign Ministers, at Mr. Bevin's suggestion, towards their postponement. It was agreed that while Italy should in the treaty formally renounce sovereignty over her colonies, the Foreign Ministers would attempt to decide their future within a year from the coming into force of the treaty (10th of February 1948). The next conflict was over the form of the interim administration. While Russia and the United States favoured some kind of international administration or, at least, control during the year, Mr. Bevin urged strongly the continuation of the present régime of British military administration without international interference.

The Emperor expressed his astonishment at the postponement of the issue and asked what possible benefit there could be in delaying an act of justice to the first victim of Fascist aggression. The peace treaty was, however, drafted on the lines proposed with the retention for the time being of the existing administration by Britain.

On the 29th of July the Peace Conference met in Paris to consider the draft treaties. The Italian delegate, de Gasperi, presumably encouraged by the French proposal and by the disagreement of the 'Big Four', made a speech in which he asked that Italy should have the trusteeship of her former colonies. After an attempt to prevent a discussion of this speech had failed, the Ethiopian delegate, Ato Aklilou, replied in strong but sober terms, pointing out that Ethiopia had suffered three invasions by Italy, and demanding the return of the 'lost provinces', access to the sea, and full reparations for the losses of the war against Italy.

When on the 23rd of September the question of the colonies came before the Italian Political Commission, Signor Bonomi questioned the legal justification for Britain continuing her occupation once Italy had renounced sovereignty. He stated that there were still 100,000 Italian nationals in the territories and asked for an Italian trusteeship over them. Italy made a claim to have carried out a civilizing mission and this naturally raised the Ethiopians to great indignation. The Italians put forward an impressive illustrated volume to show their achievements. The Ethiopians met this with their own evidence, including telegrams from Graziani ordering the murder of monks and many other atrocities.

Ato Aklilou countered with a long speech in which in addition to the arguments that have already been given some new points were made.[1] The case of Eritrea's inability to stand alone was developed further and the claim of Italy, which was unable to pay reparations, to take over this liability was condemned. It was claimed that before 1935—when the invasion was being prepared—the Italians in Eritrea numbered only some 4,000. There was danger in delay as Italy was working to obtain the trusteeship and claiming that she had support for this in the Foreign Ministers' Conference. What purpose could trusteeship serve? It could not be a preparation for independence since Eritrea could not stand alone. Ethiopia, the delegate asserted, could not accept the British proposal to put this question to the General Assembly.

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[1] *New Times*, 12 October 1946. The full text is given here.

This was a strong and eloquent speech. Indeed, all the Ethiopian speakers at the Conference put their case with ability and force. The issue was further debated and Egypt put in a claim for Massawa. Finally the Conference by a large majority accepted article 17 of the draft treaty by which Italy renounced all her rights to her former colonies and their future was to be decided within a year. Meanwhile, the present régime was to continue.

Mr. Bevin expressed his pleasure that the suggestion of the Foreign Ministers' Council for dealing with the Italian colonies had been accepted by a large majority of the Conference. He said: 'So far as we are concerned, we believe that when the Council of Foreign Ministers come to examine this problem they can hardly fail to be impressed by the desire of Ethiopia to incorporate in her territory at any rate a large part of Eritrea which is inhabited by people who are in every way akin to the inhabitants of Northern Ethiopia herself.'[1]

Before the Conference broke up the subject was rounded off for Britain more fully by Mr. Jebb in a speech to the representatives of the twenty-one powers.[2] In this he assured the South African and other interested delegates that the declaration of the Four Powers which had been annexed to the treaty and which laid down the further procedure in this question was understood by the Council as meaning that those Allied countries which fought in Africa during the war would be consulted with regard to the final disposal of the Italian colonies. He proceeded to make some important statements which merit quotation as they express Britain's considered policy upon the whole issue and indicate the line she will presumably take when the question comes up for determination.

Speaking of this postponement he remarked that 'there might be real advantage in putting off any final decision for a year during which there might be time for reflection, and for consultation with the inhabitants of the districts concerned as well as with other interested Governments.

'It is no secret, of course, that if my Government had had complete liberty of action they would have preferred a speedy solution of at any rate the part of the problem presented by the colonies.

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[1] *Herald*, 14 October 1946.

[2] *New Times*, 26 October 1946.

'Thus, they are impressed by the justice of the claim of Ethiopia to the greater part of Eritrea; they are sympathetic towards some frontier rectifications in the west in favour of Egypt.'

He hoped to see unanimity achieved at the end of the year, but he confessed that he could not say how this would be done. If it were not achieved, his Government would propose that the matter should go to the General Assembly.

'They have no doubt that if the problem should be submitted to that body, any solution which is recommended by a two-thirds majority is likely to be one which is just and equitable, and they, for their part, are entirely willing to abide by the Assembly's decision.'

On the question of the government of the colonies by the British military administration, he said: 'My Delegation would like to assure the Commission that the military government of the occupied territories has administered and is administering them in accordance with the international rules as laid down in the Hague Convention.

'Thus, the existing form of government has been maintained and the former laws have been preserved, except in so far as military needs have made this impossible.

'Moreover, contrary to what was suggested by the Italian representative, Italian officials have been retained in administrative positions' though their numbers are, of course, considerably less than they were before Italy's entrance into the war in view of the removal of Fascists, the demands of military security, and the appointment of suitable local inhabitants to positions in the administration.'

Before leaving the question of the Italian position in relation to the colonies, he made a qualifying remark which must have disturbed the Ethiopians.

'But at the same time it does not mean that Italy will necessarily be excluded from all say in every section of her old dominions.'

In conclusion he reminded his listeners of the great efforts and sacrifices which Britain had made in the regions which they had been discussing.

'Sir, in view of all this, the deserts of Libya, Eritrea, and Somaliland have something more than political significance to British Commonwealth countries.'

Thus this extremely difficult question was shelved. There still remained the question of reparations to be decided. This was argued out in the Reparations Commission in November. The Ethiopian Minister in London made one of the bitterest speeches contributed by his delegation, and castigated Italy for an attitude which, in effect, in spite of a formal renunciation of Fascism, sought to justify her crimes against his country.[1] The Minister quoted some further ferocious telegrams from Graziani ordering murders and massacres to be carried out. Once more the value of the Italian roads and other works was decried and the speech concluded with the following words: 'The Italian representative stated that Ethiopia is endeavouring to shoulder Italy with a terrific moral burden. The moral burden resting upon Italy is of her own creation, and the sooner she recognizes it, the sooner will she cleanse herself. This moral burden is far greater than my ability to express, and far greater than is possible to conceive for those who, unlike the members of this Conference, have not experienced the horrors of war in their territories.'

The final decision of the Reparations Conference, taken upon the 5th of December, was to grant Ethiopia £6,250,000—a very modest fraction of the £184,746,000 she had claimed from Italy. The Treaty, as finally drawn up, contained several further clauses of interest to Ethiopia with regard to the return of her stolen treasures and archives, the annulment of Italian Acts, and the status of Italians in Ethiopia. It was agreed that the treaty should be signed on the 10th of February 1947 in Paris.[2] We may note that Ethiopia was not included amongst those countries which had a right to demand the arrest and trial of war criminals.

Such, in brief outline, is the recent diplomatic history of the Italian colonies, with special reference to Eritrea. The destiny of this territory will not, as this record shows, be settled by the time this book is published, and the question is therefore one for further study and discussion.

It is important, for clear thinking about it, to apply the name Eritrea with the mental reservation that this awkward and artificial wedge of African territory between Ethiopia and the Sudan does not merit the territorial individuality which the use of a single name suggests. A line will probably be drawn after some hard bargaining and much historical and ethnical discussion as to its exact course to mark off the part which should go to the Sudan and that which should go to Ethiopia. For there can be little doubt, after what has been said so plainly by Britain in confirmation of Ethiopian claims, that the Tigrinya-speaking peoples of the plateau will go back to Ethiopia. The only possible question is as to whether their return should be immediate and unqualified or whether an arrangement should be made, on the lines of Brigadier Longrigg's proposal, that these provinces should be recognized as being within the Emperor's sovereignty but should be under some form of joint trusteeship between him and a trustee power for a period of years. Marked off from Ethiopia as the Mareb Mellash (the land beyond the Mareb), they have now experienced some fifty years of European government. Whatever charges can be proved against Italian policy, especially in the political and social spheres, it seems to be true that many of the people of these provinces enjoyed a higher economic standard and a much greater measure of law and order than their brothers south of the boundary. Their outlook on life has been affected by long association with European methods of government and amenities even though these were not carried on mainly in their interests.

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[1] *New Times*, 9 November 1946.

[2] *Treaties of Peace with Italy, Roumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland.* Cmd. 7022, 1947. For relevant extracts see Appendix G.

It is proposed that commissions of investigation shall be sent out to collect data and to ascertain the wishes of the local population. This may prove an extremely difficult task. It will not be easy even to find a reliable method for consulting the peoples of Eritrea with regard to their own future. It is doubtful whether they can have any clear view of the alternatives offered to them. In the Tigrinya region there is at least a large section in favour of unqualified return to Ethiopia. In spite, however, of intense pressure from the south and the organization of widely publicized demonstrations in Ethiopia and in Eritrea, there appears to be an opposition.

The British Military Administration opened the pages of the Tigrinya *Eritrean Weekly News*—the first newspaper in this language—to a discussion upon this subject during 1944.[1] While some writers expressed the fullest devotion to Ethiopia as a mother-country, there were others who desired either independence for Eritrea or some form of temporary trusteeship until Ethiopia should have fully reformed her own administration. One writer claims that the whole of Tigré with the Eritrean highlands should be given its independence as it would always continue to be a source of unrest to Ethiopia. Menelik is reproached for giving Eritrea as a present to the Italians and the writer remembers that 'our soldiers fought on the Italian side against Ethiopia. . . . During fifty years of Italian occupation we Eritreans, apart from bad things, have also learnt some discipline, but Ethiopia and the Ethiopians do not know this discipline yet. . . . Remember that the Amharas do not speak our language, do not have our character and are altogether not like us.' Another writer suggested that Ethiopia should fall again into the old groups and form a federation. 'The Shoans believe themselves to be superior to the rest of the Abyssinian population. This is probably due to the fact that Menelik II was a Shoan king and therefore they believe themselves to be chosen people. On the other hand the Tigrinya-speaking population believe themselves to be as capable as anybody else.' In contradiction to this another contributor writes: 'There is only one Ethiopia and one king, the eternal and ancient Ethiopia, with its glorious traditions. We are one people, even if we talk different languages.'

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[1] This discussion took place in August and September 1944. This journal is printed in Tigrinya and the extracts are taken from translations supplied to the writer, generally without the exact dates.

It is impossible to say which party is in the majority; if more quotations have been given here from the views of those who do not desire unconditional amalgamation, it is because most of the propaganda reaching this country ignores these views. It must not be forgotten, as a quotation included just above reminds us, that Eritreans, as colonial regiments, played a large and important part in the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, marching into Addis Ababa in 1935 'very stark and trim' behind Marshal Badoglio, 'waving their sickle swords' at the head of the victorious army.[1] They fought again and fought well against the Allied armies of liberation, though desertions increased as the Italian cause lost ground. This at least suggests that no very strong and conscious sense of national solidarity in European terms binds Eritreans to Ethiopia; but it is not to prove that such a bond could not be developed, and everything is being done in Ethiopia to-day to build up a movement for reunion. It is probable that a number of leading Tigrinya-speaking Eritreans who also speak Amharic and maintain close contacts with Ethiopia, including the Church leaders, would welcome amalgamation. As we have seen, it is part of the Ethiopian Government's claim that it makes full use of Eritrean talent in the public services. Yet the non-Amharic-speaking peasantry who have chiefly benefited from the order of Italian rule and its restraints upon landlordism would suffer under direct rule from the south and many of them probably realize this.

It would seem to be wisdom on the part of those who make or influence the decisions in the matter to do nothing to encourage a separatist movement in Tigré and its Eritrean provinces, which can never hope for any effective independent life of their own, but to foster the idea of association with fusion as the ultimate goal. Yet the Ethiopian Government hardly seems ready to take over without a period of help and advice from outside this politically difficult, advanced, and yet economically unbalanced region, with its large modern town of Asmara, its considerable Italian population, its roads, railways and other installations. If some international régime were to be set up for the administration of Massawa and the coast, it might for a time co-operate with the Emperor in dealing with the plateau.

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[1] Steer, *Caesar in Abyssinia*, p. 401.

This brings us to Massawa. The Ethiopians' historical claim to Massawa is not, as we have seen, wholly convincing. But their economic case is very strong and, compensating for the lightness of the historical claim, seems to tip the scale in her favour against the other historical claimant, Egypt. The port is bound up completely with its immediate hinterland and with the commerce of northern Ethiopia. Yet Egypt, in her present mood of assertion, is likely to challenge strongly the outright cession of this ancient Muslim port which she claims to have inherited from Turkey. Ethiopia would be ill-advised, for reasons given in the last chapter of this book, to embitter her relations with her Muslim neighbours, behind whom stands the Arab League.[1] The conflict has become more open since the Peace Conference. King Farouk in his speech from the throne to the Egyptian Parliament has made claim to Massawa and Eritrea. This has provoked a strong official rejoinder from Ethiopia.[2]

But the issue does not lie only between Ethiopia on the one side and on the other with Egypt and the Sudan, two countries whose relations at the moment of writing are causing a diplomatic crisis. Massawa presents a problem which is one with the rest of the coast.

This is all the more clear when we remember that Eritrea's long, narrow Danakil appendage runs right down the coast to French Somaliland. The Ethiopians' claim, historical or political, to annex the fierce and long-neglected Ishmaelites of this region is extremely weak. But the coast does contain the port of Assab. This is greatly inferior in capacity to Massawa, but the Ethiopian Government claims that a total Ethiopian trade of over 5,000,000 M.T. dollars passes through it. (Total trade with Eritrea, much of which must pass through Massawa, is said to be 13,500,000 dollars.) The Italians built a good road to Assab, and it is obvious that almost the whole trade of the port is Ethiopian. But here, too, there are other interests to be considered besides Ethiopia's valid claim to a guaranteed access to this port. These will best be discussed when the rest of the coastal regions, those of Somaliland, have been considered.

Before leaving the question of Eritrea it is impossible not to add a word of sympathy with the British military administration there in the very difficult position its members will hold between now and the decision as to the destiny of the territory a year or more hence. A temporary administration since the conquest, its officers have dealt with an extremely difficult and poor country under every psychological and political handicap. Now they will see the term of their rule approaching; they will be visited by international commissions probing into the opinions of a divided and backward people as to their future fate and will suffer the disturbance of organized propaganda from Ethiopia and perhaps from the Muslim countries also. This probably will work up to a crescendo as the date of decision approaches. It may be hoped that the British Government will appoint or retain in Eritrea officers of sufficient quality to meet these difficult circumstances.

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[1] It is extremely unfortunate that even while these peace negotiations were in process, a mutinous outburst by Sudanese troops in Asmara led to a heavy death-roll among the Eritrean Christians and this introduced an element of religious antagonism in a region which has been remarkably free from it. Ceremonies of mourning and sympathy were held in Addis Ababa for the murdered Eritreans.

[2] *Herald*, 9 December 1946.

As Ethiopia claimed both the Italian colonies of Somaliland and Eritrea as 'lost provinces', the general outline of diplomatic events just given with reference to the second territory largely covers the negotiations about the first. Somaliland, however, raises certain questions which need separate treatment. Mr. Bevin, at the Four Power Conference on the 29th of April, suggested special treatment for Somaliland. Italian and British Somaliland, he said, might if Ethiopia agreed, be united with the Ethiopian Ogaden to form a greater Somalia and the whole, permanently demilitarized, might be put under British trusteeship. This proposal, which did not meet with much approval from the three other powers, was afterwards elaborated by Mr. Bevin in a speech in the House of Commons on the 4th of June. The relevant portion, since this proposal still lies before the Powers, is worth quoting in full.

'Now may I turn to Eritrea and Somaliland. I think that M. Molotov has been more than unjust in stating that we are trying to expand the British Empire at the expense of Italy and Ethiopia, and to consolidate what he calls the monopolistic position of Great Britain in the Mediterranean and Red Seas. In the latter part of the last century the horn of Africa was divided between Great Britain, France, and Italy. At about the time we occupied our part, the Ethiopians occupied an inland area which is the grazing ground for nearly half the nomads of British Somaliland for six months of the year. Similarly, the nomads of Italian Somaliland must cross the existing frontiers in search of grass. In all innocence, therefore, we proposed that British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, and the adjacent part of Ethiopia, if Ethiopia agreed, should be lumped together as a trust territory, so that the nomads should lead their frugal existence with the least possible hindrance and there might be a real chance of a decent economic life, as understood in that territory.

'But what attracted M. Molotov's criticism was, I am sure, that I suggested that Great Britain should be made the administrating authority. Was this unreasonable? In the first place we were surrendering a protectorate comparable in size to the area we hoped that Ethiopia would contribute. Secondly, it was a British force, mainly East African and South African, which freed this area; and it was a British, Indian, and South African force which bore the main brunt of restoring the independence of Ethiopia and of putting the Emperor back on his throne after several years' sanctuary in this country. We do not seek gratitude on that account, but I think it right to express surprise that our proposals should have met with such unjustified criticism. After all, when we were defeating Italy in East Africa, Britain was open to invasion, and we were fighting alone. I hope the deputies at the Paris Conference will now consider a greater Somaliland more objectively.

'All I want to do in this case is to give those poor nomads a chance to live. I do not want anything else. We are paying nearly £1,000,000 a year out of our Budget to help to support them. We do not ask to save anything. But to have these constant bothers on the frontiers when one can organize the thing decently—well, after all, it is to nobody's interest to stop the poor people and cattle there getting a decent living. That is all there is to it. It is like the Englishman's desire to go into Scotland—to get a decent living. We must consider it objectively. If the Conference do not like our proposal, we will not be dogmatic about it; we are prepared to see Italian Somaliland put under the United Nations' trusteeship.'[1]

It is difficult to believe if Mr. Bevin knew the gist of his Minister's reports from Ethiopia and had not forgotten the prolonged struggle Lord de la Warr had waged over the reservation of the Ogaden in the agreement of 1944, that he would have been quite so innocent as to imagine that the Ethiopian Government would not react violently against this proposal, or that it did not represent an extension of British power. In an interview given to Reuters on the 16th of June, the Emperor refused to admit that there could be any question of the Ogaden not being returned to Ethiopia, and he refused to regard this matter as one within the scope of the Peace Conference.[2] He reiterated the claim, mainly on grounds of security, to Italian Somaliland. It was noticeable, however, that in his statement to the Peace Conference in the autumn, the Ethiopian delegate, Ato Aklilou, while rejecting the year's postponement for Eritrea, was prepared to wait this period for the adjudication over Italian Somaliland. It appears that the Ethiopian Government recognized a distinction in the importance, or at least in the validity, of their claim to Italian Somaliland as compared with that to Eritrea.

This claim is based upon the ancient, somewhat shadowy, medieval empire and it is strange that it should be made only to this one distant part of Somalia. In so far as such an ancient claim of a kind that would give Italy to Germany and parts of France to England, or vice versa, has any validity, it surely applies much more to the nearer and more useful French and British Somalilands. In the latter the Ethiopians almost certainly at times in the middle ages controlled the port of Zeila. These countries are, however, for obvious reasons of immediate policy excluded in a footnote of the official memorandum.[1] Yet a table in the same document gives figures showing the expenditure and the profits of the French company upon the Jibuti railway and it is obvious, even without this hint, that economically French Somaliland, the toll-gate set up upon Ethiopia's trade route, is much the most desirable acquisition for Ethiopia in this region.

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[1] *H. of C. Debates*, 4 June 1946, cols. 1840–1.

[2] *New Times*, 13 July 1946. The full text is given here.

Enough has been said in the historical and provincial chapters to show how little basis there is in the Ethiopian claim to most of the vast semi-desert region of Somalia, which threw off at least five centuries ago such overlordship as Ethiopia exercised over parts of it. Even before this its semi-nomadic tribes became fiercely Muslim. It is true that Ethiopia annexed, if she did not fully occupy or administer, the Ogaden region at the very end of the nineteenth century. To this region she has just as good a claim as has Britain to her section of Somaliland which she annexed at almost the same time. Ethiopian sovereignty was recognized again by Britain in the clearest terms in the agreements of 1942 and 1944. The reservation was made largely for military reasons which passed away with the end of the war. The other practical reasons why the British authorities wish to continue to administer the turbulent, migratory Somalis upon a common plan have been given above,[2] but it is doubtful whether these practical advantages should be allowed to outweigh the injury which this retention does to our relations with a country so supersensitive upon questions of sovereignty and prestige. It appears that the 19th of December 1946 was the first date on which either party could give notice of the termination of the 1944 agreement, and Ethiopia is fully entitled to terminate the agreement and administer the Ogaden herself. The Ogaden may for the most part be a worthless arid steppe, but it bulks large upon the map—the Emperor refers to it as a quarter of his empire—and it is easy for Britain's enemies to represent the continued retention of it under our administration as an indefensible act of imperialism.

Looking at the claim to Italian Somaliland and, by implication, ultimately to the rest of Somalia outside the Ogaden, the Ethiopian case seems to be as weak here, from the practical view-point of government, as it is upon historical right. Somaliland has so far always been a liability

[1] *Ethiopian Memoranda* (1945), p. 5.

[2] See above, p. 362.

to its foreign rulers, showing deficits in its budgets, and Mr. Bevin himself stated that it was costing Britain £1,000,000 a year to adminster the area under her control.[1] European rulers have retained their position there mainly for strategic reasons. Ethiopia has a clear right to ask that she should be safeguarded from the use of Somalia as a base of operations against herself and that she should have access to the ports. But it should be possible to give her guarantees in both matters without her endeavouring to undertake with her inadequate financial and administrative resources the government of these immense, unruly, and unprofitable territories. It has already been seen that British help was required even for the disarmament patrol along the small fringe of Somali country still under Ethiopia's control. Mr. Bevin's suggestion, if Ethiopia would consent—a very important provision—is for a British trusteeship of all Somalia or, failing that, for Italian Somaliland to be put under United Nations' trusteeship.

When the whole situation with regard to the Italian and the other colonies in the horn of Africa is reviewed, there seem to be strong reasons here for an experiment in international action. It is difficult at a time when the United Nations Organization has disappointed so many of the early hopes for its smooth and effective working, to press with complete conviction for a large addition to its responsibilities. Yet if an improvement in relations with Russia should open up better hopes of co-operation, international administration would be the best answer to all the problems presented by the coast from the Sudan frontier—or even farther north—and that of Kenya. There are larger issues at stake than the difficulty for Ethiopia in handling newly annexed Muslim coastlands and the modern ports to which she so much needs access, but which she might not be able herself to administer with the highest efficiency and certainly could not defend. All these coasts and ports which interest her are also of the greatest importance to several nations and, indeed, to the world in general. They lie along the western side of a narrow route of the highest commercial and strategic importance, the main link by sea between the western and eastern worlds.

The coast and the hinterland to a varying depth but running far inland to cover most of Somalia is unproductive semi-desert, carrying a sparse nomadic population. The groups here in spite of linguistic and traditional divisions, are very homogeneous in race, religion, and culture, and they would profit greatly from a unified political and scientific attention to their very special problems. With a single revenue, or, indeed, a single subsidy, this might be more possible than it has been in the past. The Somalis at least, so uniform in culture, so capable, and virile individually, so incompetent politically, might begin to settle into the unity that would end those age-old conflicts over water and grazing which have kept them all through their history in a mosaic of clans. Again, a unified administration could carry on the work which has been begun under the unified British military administration of studying and regulating their drift towards the west. If they have much to gain by this change, they have little to lose in their former quadrapartite government. Not one of the four nations which has governed them has given them much.[1] Unlike most other colonial peoples, they have refused to take the stamp of a foreign language and culture, and they would have little or nothing to unlearn in coming under an international tutelage.

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[1] *H. of C. Debates*, 4 June 1946, col. 1841.

On the side of international relations there are clear advantages in the proposal. Almost any other solution would be bound to raise fears or jealousies. But by this measure each power, Ethiopia, Britain, France, Italy, and—as concerns her very questionable claims—Egypt, would make a sacrifice and would also, it is hoped, provide an active contribution, balanced by that of less interested powers, towards making the experiment a success. If this plan should prove to be impracticable the Foreign Ministers will be thrown back upon the alternatives which are before them.

One of these is Ethiopia's demand to annex Italian Somaliland. A judgement upon this must depend upon the opinion formed of her internal stability and administrative capacity. In the preceding pages some of the available evidence for such an opinion has been collected. The writer would certainly doubt whether it would be in Ethiopia's interests to undertake at this time another vast area of difficult and expensive Muslim territory. Moreover, if Italian Somaliland were gained, it seems certain, to judge by the story of Ethiopia's imperialist expansion, that she would before long reach out to annex the two other Somali regions.

The other plan before the Foreign Ministers, that of trusteeship under Italy, does little credit to its French sponsors. There have been few acts of aggression in the whole of history so unprovoked and cynical in conception and so brutal in action as the Italian attack upon Ethiopia. It was, moreover, an act in deliberate and flagrant violation of their specific treaties and of general international obligations. The Italian leaders, as shown by the books by Badoglio and de Bono, were proud to publish dispatches and telegrams glorying in the lawlessness of their aggression and jeering at the pacific and Christian bearing of the Emperor. It is impossible not to sympathize with the Ethiopian delegates, as far as the published evidence yet allows us to judge, in their view that the attitude of the Italians at the Peace Conference gave inadequate proof of their political conversion. It is unthinkable that Italy should be re-established in East Africa, and remembering the frustrated emotion of the British public at the time of the aggression it seems certain that there would be a powerful reaction in this country against such a policy.

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[1] Sir William Platt, who is very critical of British neglect, is inclined to give most credit to the Italians. He claims, however, that British military administration has introduced a much more progressive policy. East Africa Command, *African Affairs*, January 1946.

It would be unprofitable to speculate about the possible lines upon which Ethiopian foreign policy may develop. Her immediate attention is mainly concentrated upon gaining all she can of the ex-Italian colonies. The decision upon these will largely govern her future action. For the rest it has been seen in the last chapter of the book how close her relations with Britain must be. Much evidence has appeared of her determination to show her independence, as before 1935, by cultivating relations with many powers instead of relying upon one or two.

The United Nations gives small and weak powers a magnificent sounding board against which to proclaim their needs and their fears. There are signs that the coloured peoples who believe themselves to have been wronged in the past or to be threatened in the future by the so-called imperialist powers will, with this encouragement, draw together and upon some issues at least present a common front. The strength and intractibility of that front will depend upon the wisdom or unwisdom of the great powers in their dealings with the less developed peoples. But the future of these peoples, as of all others, will depend much more upon the great issue which confronts the world to-day. This, of course, is whether the 'western' and the 'eastern' powers, with their divergent political and social philosophies, will come to terms or force the rest of the world to divide into two camps with the danger that these may become war-camps. Few Ethiopians can yet be aware of the meaning of the alternatives that lie before them. Yet in the spring of 1948, when their own local problems come up for a decision, it may have become more clear how this great world issue will be decided.

APPENDIX G

EXTRACTS FROM THE PEACE TREATY WITH ITALY[1]

(Signed in Paris on the 10th of February 1947)

Part II.—Section IV., p. 15

ITALIAN COLONIES

ARTICLE 23

1. Italy renounces all right and title to the Italian territorial possessions in Africa, i.e. Libya, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland.

2. Pending their final disposal, the said possessions shall continue under their present administration.

3. The final disposal of these possessions shall be determined jointly by the Governments of the Soviet Union, of the United Kingdom, of the United States of America, and of France within one year from the coming into force of the present Treaty, in the manner laid down in the joint declaration of the 10th of February 1947, issued by the said Governments, which is reproduced in Annex XI.

Part II.—Section VII, pp. 16–17

ETHIOPIA

ARTICLE 33

Italy recognizes and undertakes to respect the sovereignty and independence of the State of Ethiopia.

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[1] *Treaties of Peace with Italy, Roumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland.* Misc. no. 1 (1947), Cmd. 7022.

ARTICLE 34

Italy formally renounces in favour of Ethiopia all property (apart from normal diplomatic or consular premises), rights, interests and advantages of all kinds acquired at any time in Ethiopia by the Italian State, as well as all para-statal property as defined in paragraph 1 of Annex XIV of the present Treaty.

Italy also renounces all claims to special interests or influence in Ethiopia.

ARTICLE 35

Italy recognizes the legality of all measures which the Government of Ethiopia has taken or may hereafter take in order to annul Italian measures respecting Ethiopia taken after the 3rd of October 1935, and the effects of such measures.

ARTICLE 36

Italian nationals in Ethiopia will enjoy the same juridical status as other foreign nationals, but Italy recognizes the legality of all measures of the Ethiopian Government annulling or modifying concessions or special rights granted to Italian nationals, provided such measures are taken within a year from the coming into force of the present Treaty.

ARTICLE 37

Within eighteen months from the coming into force of the present Treaty, Italy shall restore all works of art, religious objects, archives and objects of historical value belonging to Ethiopia or its nationals and removed from Ethiopia to Italy since the 3rd of October 1935.

ARTICLE 38

The date from which the provisions of the present Treaty shall become applicable as regards all measures and acts of any kind whatsoever entailing the responsibility of Italy or of Italian nationals towards Ethiopia, shall be held to be the 3rd of October 1935.

EXTRACTS FROM PEACE TREATY WITH ITALY

Part XI.—Annex XI, p. 65

JOINT DECLARATION BY THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE SOVIET UNION, OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND OF FRANCE CONCERNING ITALIAN TERRITORIAL POSSESSIONS IN AFRICA

(See Article 23)

1. The Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the United States of America, and of France agree that they will, within one year from the coming into force of the Treaty of Peace with Italy bearing the date of the 10th of February 1947, jointly determine the final disposal of Italy's territorial possessions in Africa, to which, in accordance with Article 23 of the Treaty, Italy renounces all right and title.

2. The final disposal of the territories concerned and the appropriate adjustment of their boundaries shall be made by the Four Powers in the light of the wishes and welfare of the inhabitants and the interests of peace and security, taking into consideration the views of other interested Governments.

3. If with respect to any of these territories the Four Powers are unable to agree upon their disposal within one year from the coming into force of the Treaty of Peace with Italy, the matter shall be referred to the General Assembly of the United Nations for a recommendation, and the Four Powers agree to accept the recommendation and to take appropriate measures for giving effect to it.

4. The Deputies of the Foreign Ministers shall continue the consideration of the question of the disposal of the former Italian Colonies with a view to submitting to the Council of Foreign Ministers their recommendations on this matter. They shall also send out commissions of investigation to any of the former Italian Colonies in order to supply the Deputies with the necessary data on this question and to ascertain the views of the local population

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